LIFE IN THE MOSLEM EAST

PIERRE PONAFIDINE

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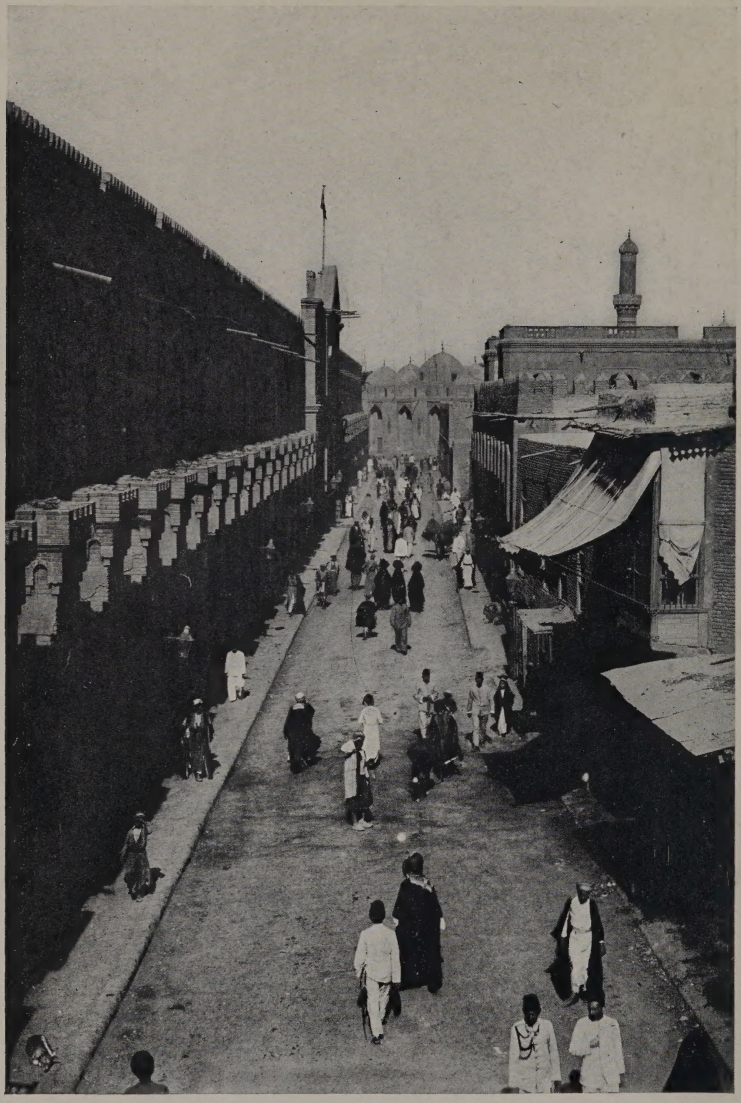

STREET OF BAGDAD

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LIFE
IN THE
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BY
PIERRE PONAFIDINE

IMPERIAL RUSSIAN CONSUL GENERAL IN CONSTANTINOPLE
FORMERLY OCCUPYING SIMILAR POSITIONS IN VARIOUS
PARTS OF PERSIA AND TURKEY

Translated from the Russian by
EMMA COCHRAN PONAFIDINE

NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS

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To our dear Friend
STEPHEN M. CLEMENT
A tribute of love and
sincere esteem

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

IT is with much diffidence that I give the translation of my husband's book to the English-speaking public, and I hope they will deal leniently with my share of the work.

The book itself I feel needs no apology. It is not a pretentious history, nor an exhaustive treatise on the countries upon which it touches. It is more a series of studies of certain phases of the life, religion and customs of people among whom my husband has passed the thirty-six years of his service, people for whom he has learned to have a deep sympathy, and often affection, and whom he has striven to present impartially.

The fact of his having been for some years Secretary of Legation in Teheran, acting Consul General in Tabriz, five years Consul in Bagdad, five years Consul General in Meshed, two years on a special mission to Tashkent and the Pamirs, and for the last seven years Consul General in Constantinople is a guarantee for his personal acquaintance with the subjects treated.

It is the English part of the work that calls forth these lines, for it has been done under various difficuties. Being my first attempt in translating I have not always found it easy to preserve as I have endeavoured to do, something of the style and individuality of the author in the original, and yet render it in good English.

A second difficulty is one always met with in such works, and that is, the English spelling of Oriental names. In dealing with this problem I have followed such writers as have seemed to me to give the most correct rendering of Eastern names and words, even though they are not always the most popularly accepted forms.

The third difficulty, and perhaps the most serious one, has been in the distance from the publishers, which has made it impossible for me to correct the proofs.

In conclusion I would add that we feel that it is our duty as well as pleasure to express our sincerest thanks to our friends, Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Edward Poynter, for their warm interest and help, without which I doubt if I should have had the courage to undertake the translation.

Constantinople, May 1st, 1910.

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LIFE IN THE MOSLEM EAST

CHAPTER I

IN BAGDAD

Serdabs—Means of Navigation on the Tigris—Past and Present Bagdad—Inhabitants—The Tomb of Zobeida—Mosques of Abdul Kadir, Ahmed Heaeh and Sauk-el-Gazele—Kazmain—Mosque of Imam Musa—Life in Bagdad, its Peculiarities—Nomads—Amusements—Buffaloes—Snakes—Bagdad Nights—Unpleasant Neighbours—Dervishes and their Orders—Orders of Rufai and Mevlevie—Begging Dervishes—What are the Conditions of the Existence of Dervishes—Initiation—Miraculous Powers of the Sheikhs—Travelling Dervishes—Kalandars.

BAGDAD, October; that is to say, the season of the year when the inhabitants of the city are thinking of moving out of the underground rooms called "serdabs," in which the hottest months are passed.

In Bagdad, and a few other towns of Western Asia, where for six months of the year the thermometer rises to 115° F., in every house these subterranean chambers are built. The deeper the "serdab" the cooler it is, but at the same time the damper. The word "cooler," when applied to anything describing Bagdad, must be taken comparatively, as even in the best serdabs the thermometer varies from 92° to 99° F. These rooms are usually kept dark, the light entering through small windows, sometimes openings, where instead of glass is placed a lattice of palm filled with the prickly camel's thorn, called "agul." Several times a day water is sprinkled on these thorns, and the moisture thus formed cools the hot wind as it passes through the rooms, giving a comparatively

refreshing breeze. But towards sunset these serdabs become unbearably close, and then the entire city mounts to the flat roofs, where they dine and sleep.

As I write these lines, living in a different climate and among quite other surroundings, and separated from the period of which I am writing by nearly twenty years, before my eyes as by magic comes the picture we used to see from the height of our roofs: the Tigris shining in the moonlight, which in that cloudless sky is unusually radiant; the green belt of palm and orange gardens watered by this Biblical river bounding Mesopotamia, the cradle of the human race, and the site, according to some more or less problematical theories, of the Garden of Eden; the scene of the feats of Nimrod and of Nebuchadnezzar—at that time a flowering garden, now a desert. But now, as then, the troubled waters of the Tigris sparkle and shine in the moonlight, as they rush by. In perfect accord with the scene is the sound of the amateur singer who floats by in his round, cup-like boat of basket work smeared with bitumen, and guided by a sort of shovel in lieu of an oar. These bowls used instead of ordinary boats are mentioned by Herodotus, and are to be seen on some of the old Assyrian sculptures that date back 1,000 years before our era. They are called "guffas," and are often of considerable size, capable of carrying 1,500 pounds or more.

The swift current of the Tigris, or "Arrow," makes the round form of these boats preferable to those of usual pointed shape. The swiftness of the waters of the Tigris fully justifies the name of "Arrow," for in the spring the current sweeps down at a speed of fully six miles an hour. Under these circumstances an ordinary boat is easily capsized, while these round boats prove to be more stable. Going down the river the guffa has two motions, the forward one and a constant rotating on its own axle.

This turning has the advantage of presenting a constant change in the landscape, but to the uninitiated it sometimes proves disagreeable, bringing on giddiness that can only be overcome by keeping one's eyes fixed on the bottom of the boat—hardly an inspiring way of travelling. Against the current the guffas have to be towed.

Aside from the guffas the only other native craft on the Tigris are sailboats called "bellams," built of palmwood and also covered like Noah's ark of old with bitumen. They sail with the current, and against it with favourable winds, but in a calm, or with head winds, they, too, are towed by men. These bellams are to be met with mostly between Bagdad and Bassorah. Between Mosul and Bagdad the communication is by "kelleks"—rafts made by inflating sheepskins, and by laying over them matting or a floor of branches or boards. Fifty or a hundred skins are often used in the construction of such a raft, which, on arriving at Bagdad, is broken up and the skins sold at a good profit. If passengers are carried, a tent or small hut can be arranged. The rafts float down with the speed of the current, from one to six miles an hour, according to the season of the year. As the raft passes villages, or the black tents of the half-nomadic tribes, the women often come out riding astride on a buffalo that swims alongside the raft, carrying on their heads curds, milk, butter and eggs to sell. In this way the traveller gets fresh supplies for his table and his sense of the picturesque satisfied at the same time.

But other recollections come to me—not the autumn, but the hot season. The same moonlight, the same cloudless sky, but quite different impressions. Worn out by the continued heat one longs for a respite and a breath of cool air, and here on the roof, though it is night and the bricks have been freely wet with cold water, the temperature is ninety-nine degrees or above. Even at this dis-

tance I cannot remember without a shudder the long, sleepless nights passed on the roof at Bagdad! Sometimes in addition the hot simoom blew, bringing clouds of the finest dust, and during such fearful nights cases of death by heat apoplexy not infrequently occurred. At such times the only relief to be found was in covering up head and all in a thick quilt.

With the first rays of the sun one has to go down to the verandas or gardens, and a little later to the dusky serdabs where the whole day is spent, until the evening cool again permits of going up to the roof. And so we drag on day after day, without the possibility of escaping from the heat even for a few hours. Adding to this the numberless swarms of mosquitoes and other insects, scorpions, and sometimes snakes that frequent the serdabs, the reader can understand that the mere fact of existence may become a burden.

The derivation of the name of Bagdad is disputed. Some authorities claim it to come from Baga, the name of the mythical god of the Chaldees; others consider it to be from Bag, garden; and a third supposition traces it to the name of a dervish who enjoyed great popularity at the time of the building of Bagdad. The city is built on both banks of the Tigris, connected by a pontoon bridge 700 feet long. The city proper, however, is on the left bank of the river. Here are to be found the administrative buildings, the ancient citadel, mosques, caravan serais and all the foreign consulates, excepting the Persian. The city on the right bank has now dwindled to a mere suburb inhabitated by Shiite Arabs, and here, too, is the Persian consulate.

The population of Bagdad is estimated to be about 145,000, of which 50,000 are Sunnite Mohammedans, and 35,000 Shiite Mohammedans. Of Christian sects there are Greeks, Greek-Catholics, Armenians and Armenian-

Catholics, in all about 7,000. The Jews are estimated at 52,000.

Bagdad was founded 763 A.D. by the second Abbasside caliph, Abu Jaffar-el-Mansur, according to his own plans. It took three years to build the city, and a good description of it has come down to us. The city was surrounded by a wall thirty feet high and eight feet wide. The palace of the caliph, of which not a trace now remains, was of fabulous beauty. Twenty-four thousand streets were laid out, each of which possessed its own mosque and public bath. One hundred and fifty canals ran through the city carrying water from the Tigris, and across which were thrown one hundred and fifty bridges. By the order of the Caliph Jaffar-el-Mansur a colossal canal was dug and can yet be traced. From this main artery ran six hundred small canals carrying water to irrigate the suburbs of Bagdad, now a desert.

Thanks to its geographical position Bagdad flourished rapidly, and during the reign of Haroun-al-Rashid became the centre of the Eastern trade and the seat of culture. The fame of its glory and untold riches spread throughout the then known world, and has come down to us through the Arab historians, who devoted many pages to describing its palaces, mosques and public buildings, at a period when Europe was yet sunk in barbarism.

At the close of the ninth century the population of Bagdad is said to have been 2,000,000, that is as many as there are now to be found in the whole huge province of Bagdad.

Haroun-al-Rashid fully merited his world renown and may well be termed the "Caliph of the Sun." He was a contemporary and ally of Charlemagne, with whom he kept in frequent communication, and we read of many presents passing between these two great representatives of the Eastern and Western civilisation.

Among the gifts sent by the caliph to Charlemagne is mentioned a wonderful clock, the first ever introduced into Europe.

Haroun-al-Rashid died in the full strength and prime of life at the age of forty-seven, after reigning gloriously twenty-three years, and was buried within the sacred mosque of the eighth Imam Riza, at Meshed.

Already during the reign of the third son of Haroun-al-Rashid the decline of Bagdad began. The capital was transferred to Samara, ninety-three miles from Bagdad. The caliph turned the slaves captured in Turkestan into an army, and though he led them to victorious wars, they were mutinous, and disorders, culminating in civil war, followed. By 1118 the Abbasside caliphate had lost much of its former prestige and power, and by 1258 Bagdad was taken by Hulaku, the grandson of Jenghiz Khan, who ordered the execution of all sayids and wise men; during his wholesale massacres 350,000 souls perished.

In 1401 Bagdad was taken by Tamerlane and then passed successively from Persians to Turks and back until it came finally into the hands of the latter in 1638. This event is commemorated by the conquering Sultan Murad IV. in an inscription over one of the citadel gates —now bricked up—through which he broke into the city.

It is not to be wondered at that from the thirteenth century the importance and power of Bagdad diminished, its fabulous wealth vanished and its population decreased. This was hastened by the epidemics which devastated Bagdad, the great plague of 1831 carrying off over half of the population. In the Bagdad of our days it needs the liveliest imagination to reproduce that once famous queen of the Eastern cities.

At the present time Bagdad serves as the commercial centre joining the trade of Europe and Asia. The chief

MOSQUE OF IMAM AZAM HANIFE

exports, amounting to the sum of $7,500,000, are grain, wool, feathers, licorice, tobacco, silk, skins, hides, gum, carpets and horses. In exchange are imported Manchester goods, iron, tea, coffee and sugar, in all amounting to the sum of $4,800,000.

From a distance, and especially from the deck of the steamer as one approaches, Bagdad is very beautiful, with its mosques and minarets framed by the lofty date palms and the noble river in the foreground; but the moment one sets foot on shore, and sees the narrow, dirty streets, the illusion vanishes. Few cities have been built and rebuilt on so many successive layers of ruins. Very little remains to mark the golden age of Bagdad, though one constantly comes across the yet more ancient bricks bearing the stamp of Nebuchadnezzar that have been brought from the ruins of Babylon and are used in modern buildings. We do not know even where the famous palace of Haroun-al-Rashid stood. From this epoch remains only the tomb of Zobeida, Haroun-al-Rashid's favourite wife, and Khan Ortma, a handsome and extensive caravanserai. All other ancient buildings are of a later date and present an unusually happy combination of Persian and Arabic styles of architecture. Worthy of notice among the latter is the mosque over the grave of Abdul Kadir Delani, restored by Sultan Murad IV. in the seventeenth century. Abdul Kadir is one of the most revered of the Sunnite saints, and great donations have been received by this mosque for its support and that of the school connected with it. Its yearly revenue is 50,000 Turkish pounds, or about $231,000. Among the few monuments of interest must be added also the unusually beautiful mosque of Ahmed Heaeh, with its minarets; the mausoleum over the tomb of Haroun-al-Rashid's brother, built in the thirteenth century; the mausoleum of Joshua, which is in the care of the Jews, and, finally, the

mosque of Sauk-el-Gazele, with its beautiful minarets one hundred and eight feet in height.

In speaking of Bagdad one must not forget Kazmain, a town about four miles from Bagdad and inhabited by Persian and Indian Shiites. This town is more attractive than Bagdad, as the Persians have far more artistic instinct than the Turks, and their love for trees and flowers is seen on every side. However small a courtyard, a few flowers, trees, or even bushes are sure to be found, and wherever irrigating streams of water flow along the side of the street a row of trees is planted. Even the small shopkeeper will have a few marigolds and four-o'clocks growing in front of his door disputing the narrow sidewalk with the passer-by.

But Kazmain is noted chiefly as a place of pilgrimage for the Shiite world, drawn here by the tomb of one of their saints, Imam Musa, in whose honour is the mosque with five minarets bearing his name. There is no building in Bagdad to compare in size and beauty with this mosque. Its two domes are covered with gold leaf, the present of Naser-ed-Deen Shah. From all over the Shiite world pilgrims come to pray at this tomb, bearing offerings until the revenue of the mosque has reached a colossal sum.

Life in Bagdad owing to its unusual climatic conditions has its peculiar characteristics. As during the greater part of the seven hot months the inhabitants live by day in the serdabs and at night on the roofs, they are obliged to rise very early, before the sun is up, or at least with its first rays. At that hour the city begins to live, bazaars and offices open and the working class commences its day, but towards noon the city life dies down until between four and five o'clock. During these middle hours of the day all adults cease work and only half-grown boys find something to do. I often remarked with

feelings of deepest pity the burdens far beyond their years carried by boys in Bagdad.

With the beginning of the cooler weather, September, the serdabs may be exchanged up to midday for the verandas, but from then to four o'clock one is again condemned to serdabs, returning later in the afternoon to the veranda and at night again to the roof. Throughout this period one has to live a nomadic life particularly inconvenient during illness, or when working, thus being obliged to move all one's belongings several times a day.

The long evenings on the roof were particularly wearisome. It was impossible to read or write, as myriads of mosquitoes and other winged insects attracted by the light poisoned one's existence, and therefore lamps were placed at a distance from those sitting on the roof.

Amusements? What amusements can one have in an Eastern city and with such a climate? From time to time dinners, tennis and cricket for the more energetic, and rides that all tried to keep up for health's sake if not for pleasure. The rides were invariably in one direction—out in the boundless desert where all met on some little mounds, the nearest apologies for mountains we had, about a mile and a half from the city. These rides were taken either very early in the morning before sunrise, or an hour or so before sunset.

We often drove out in a little one-horse carriage, and many were the amusing incidents that broke the monotony of the drives. In our time there were but three or four other carriages in all Bagdad, which was fortunate, as many streets were too narrow for two vehicles to pass. We generally had outriders ahead to see if the road was clear, but once or twice we were caught in these narrow streets meeting the governor general. Then all we could do was to alight and with him stand in the street until the horses were unharnessed, one of the carriages

turned around by hand and then, the horses heading towards the opposite direction from which they had come, one of us would make way for the other.

The most unpleasant meetings were with buffaloes that just at our hour for driving in the morning or evening would be going or returning from their pastures. In Bagdad and throughout Mesopotamia cows find difficulty in surviving the great heat and therefore buffaloes are kept as better able to bear the climate. These useful creatures fulfil various functions; buffalo cows are milked; buffaloes take the place of horses in cultivating the fields, in carrying burdens on their backs, and even form substitutes for boats in case of need, and their flesh is used for food. These powerful animals are fine swimmers, and an Arab mounted astride one will cross the Tigris about 1,500 feet broad, not at full flood, but still when the current is running two and a half to three miles an hour. The process is very simple. The Arab strips, makes a bundle of his clothes, which he carries on his head, and with a stick in his hand they enter the river. The buffalo fights the current bravely, swimming with only his nose and horns above water, the Arab encouraging him with his voice and stick and endeavouring to so guide him that the current may not carry him too far below their goal on the opposite bank.

It is interesting sometimes to watch a whole family cross the Tigris in this way. If, as occasionally happens, an Arab slips off the buffalo's back, he tries to get hold of the tail or swim along on the upper side of the animal. The Arab cultivators of the soil, or fellahs, bordering the Euphrates or Tigris, are all good swimmers from childhood. Every morning about sunrise during the summer months we watched from our roof the same picture: a whole class of boys, thirty or forty, swimming under the guidance of a teacher, who, seated in a guffa, paddled

after them. Seldom we saw a boy need more than an encouraging shout from the master, each one tried to swim for himself. The only real danger here was from sharks that sometimes follow steamers up from the Persian Gulf, but they generally attack solitary bathers. Occasionally very large sharks get up as far as Bagdad.

To return to the buffalo. This animal is not as gentle as its stupid looks would lead one to suppose, and from time to time the inhabitants of the city would, with justice, complain of him. A herd will sometimes stampede without any apparent cause, rushing madly through the narrow streets, bellowing and sweeping down all before them, pedestrians and even horsemen. We had such an experience with them on returning from a drive one evening. We were in the carriage with four outriders, two ahead and two behind. Just at the entrance of the city we overtook a herd of about twenty buffaloes. In passing them I noticed that the head one tossed his huge horns in a menacing manner. A few minutes later we heard from behind the cry of "Buffaloes! Buffaloes!" All the horsemen back of us dashed past, but as we pretty well filled the narrow street they had almost to jump over our wheels or graze their horses. Those on foot tried to get into gateways or slip through open doors. Looking back I saw the buffaloes with lowered heads gaining on us and I put our horse into a gallop. He, frightened by the tramping herd behind, and instinctively feeling the danger, broke into a full run, and all that I could do was to try to guide him safely around sharp corners. In this way, tearing madly along, we finally reached the broad gates of our yard and had just time to swing in while the waiting groom, grasping the situation, closed the gates and the enraged herd rushed by. We found afterwards that in their victorious charge they had injured several persons.

As the cool season approached one could shoot duradji in the gardens about Bagdad. These birds keep close to the prickly cover to be found everywhere, and European dogs find great difficulty in raising the game, though returning from their efforts with badly scratched ears. The local mongrel dogs work their way very cleverly and do not so quickly tire. The most unpleasant part of shooting was the constant danger of stepping on snakes, though we were not free from that danger even in the houses. My writing table in the serdab stood right under the "bagdir," or ventilating shaft running up from the serdab to the roof. One day working there I heard something soft and heavy flop down on the table. Raising my head I saw a large snake over a yard long crawling towards me over the table. It was killed and proved to be a harmless kind. But there is an exceedingly venomous snake, almost as much so as a cobra, that we found from time to time in the house. They glide into such small cracks that it is difficult to believe one's own eyes seeing the size of the reptile.

Once sitting on the veranda we were attracted by the cries of our monkey Figaro, whose language we understood. His danger cry was a shrill sound resembling krrr, krrr. Glancing at Figaro I saw that he was looking and pointing at one of the stone pillars that supported the veranda, but could see nothing. The monkey, too, calmed down, but in a few minutes repeated his warning "krrr, krrr." Soon I saw from a hole so small one could hardly pass one's finger, the head of a snake. At my approach it disappeared. We were determined to dislodge our unwelcome tenant, but for a time all our efforts were in vain. Finally some one found the way. Bringing boiling water it was thrown into the hole, and the snake immediately flung itself out and was killed. It proved to be poisonous. Another time a venomous

snake was found in the bed. The natives affirm, and in Persia I have heard the same, that as nights become cool snakes often creep into beds to get warm. How correct this interpretation of their motives may be, it is a fact that snakes are not infrequently found in beds. The wife of our cook was in this way bitten by a snake, and though the poison was immediately sucked out and then the wound cauterised with a hot iron, she was seriously ill for a couple of weeks.

And the famous Bagdad nights of Sheherazade! Those nights when Haroun-al-Rashid in disguise listened to the conversation of the passerby on the pontoon bridge! Alas, either the climate has undergone a change since that time, or one must be born in Bagdad to appreciate such nights. For from six to seven months in the year the nights are simply unbearable, when even the "cold light of the moon" does not lessen but at full moon actually increases the heat. Though the flat roof is frequently and plentifully sprinkled with water, it evaporates almost instantly, leaving a hothouse atmosphere.

What added to the misery of our nights was the adjoining "tekke," or home of the howling dervishes, the founder of which, Abdul Gelian, died in Bagdad 1165 A.D. Over his tomb is the tekke and mosque mentioned above. Their peculiar service was held every Thursday evening on the roof of the house almost adjoining ours, beginning at about nine o'clock and lasting until midnight or much later, until some one ended in an hysterical fit and in convulsions cried out wholly unintelligible words. At the beginning the sheikh sang a solo from verses of the Koran in rather a pleasing tenor, but this did not last long. Then followed the repetition of their creed, "La Illahi illal Lahu," there is no God but God, constantly increasing in fastness of time until it becomes a dull roar, changing after an hour into positively inhu-

man sounds, broken occasionally by hysterical shouts or screams. These neighbours were so unpleasant that we should have changed our house had there been a suitable one vacant on the Tigris.

The institution of dervishes occupies so important a place among the Sunnites that it is worthy of some mention here. In speaking of dervishes Europeans usually compare them with monks, and their common living houses with the monasteries. This is hardly an accurate comparison. A religion that permits polygamy and whose picture of paradise is peopled with houris does not, of course, admit monks in our sense of the word, and most dervishes are married men. But from the point of view of asceticism, withdrawal from the world, living the life of prayer and meditation—in a word, live to obtain paradise—in this sense, perhaps, it is correct to compare them with monks and their common habitation, or tekke, with a monastery, though still with certain reservations.

According to Mohammed's teachings all the joys and rewards of paradise are purely secular. It is a place of indulgence of every sort. In seeking for this happiness forty persons from Medina during the lifetime of the Prophet formed a brotherhood founded on the socialistic principle, of all property being common, and, abjuring the world, devoted themselves to a life of prayer and meditation. This brotherhood was called Sufi, some think from the name of a place near Mecca where the cult was formed, others from the Greek word "sophias" (wisdom), while the third theory is that the name was derived from "saf," pure. This community formed the seed of the future dervishes. In the year 37 of the hegira, a certain Uveiz-Karshi declared that to him appeared Gabriel (the angel who plays so prominent a rôle in the Mohammedan religion) commanding him to leave the world and to live a retired life. The rules of the

order of Uveizi were most stringent, demanding absolute abstinence from all that was worldly, and a literal imitation of the life of the Prophet. The founder of the order went so far as to have all his teeth extracted in remembrance of Mohammed's having lost four teeth in battle. Under such conditions it was not surprising that the followers of this order were few. But, notwithstanding, simultaneous with this cult others with less drastic rules were formed. The founders were among the most devoted followers of Mohammed's sons-in-law, Ali and Abu-Bekr, the first caliphs. In all there were thirty such orders. Of these those of Besstani, Nakshe Bendi, and Becktashi count Abu-Bekr as their patron, the rest Ali. Each of these orders takes its name from its founder. The successive leaders of these orders are called pirs or sheikhs, and all the other members of the community dervishes, a word of Persian origin meaning threshold, symbolic of the humiliation and meekness that should be the attributes of every dervish, to whatsoever cult he may belong. There was one order that stood out quite distinct from all others, that of the Nakshe Bendi, to which in the last century belonged nearly the whole of the Turkish aristocracy. This was in fact a religious society that assembled at the house of its president in order to read prayers. No other conditions were laid on this order.

All other orders have their rules and their particular robes and head-dress. Some wear high pointed felt caps, others low and round, some turbans wound according to a certain fashion. Many communities, too, have their peculiar way of wearing the hair. Some let it grow long and let it hang freely over the shoulders; others braid it, while some twist the hair into a sort of chignon, etc.

The succession in each order is jealously guarded. The leadership is inherited by the one most closely fulfilling

the conditions of the holy life, wherefore the genealogy in each order is called "Silselit-ul-evlia-Ullah" which being interpreted is, "the chain of sacred gods."

Though differing in the interpretation of holy living and its duties, all dervishes unite in seven chief articles of faith, forming the basis of oral worship. Aside from the regulated prayers, they are obliged to repeat as often as possible the formula of their creed. First, La illahi illal lahu. Second, Ya Allah, "O God." Third, Ya Khuba, "He, Existor." Fourth, Ya Hakk, "O Just." Fifth, Ya Hai, "O, Living." Sixth, Ya Khai Um, "O, Existing." Seventh, Ya Kakahar, "O, Revenger."

These exclamations enumerating the principal attributes of God are repeated constantly by dervishes of whatever order they may be. They also have their place in the initiation of neophytes. When anyone expresses a desire to enter an order, the candidate has to go through a trial which differs in different communities. Then the candidate is admitted to a general assembly of the dervishes, where the sheikh for the first time whispers in his ear the first article of the creed, "La illahi illal lahu," which the novice is required to repeat a certain number of times, varying from one hundred to three hundred. After this the neophyte is obliged to retire from the world and give himself up to meditation, and any vision or dream that may come to him at this time he is obliged to relate to the sheikh. The latter invites the neophyte after a longer or shorter time, judging by the number and character of these visions, to a second meeting, where he whispers in his ear the second article of faith, "Ya Allah," and so on until he has gone through the seven articles of their creed, which sometimes takes months or even years. Only after this initiation is the neophyte admitted to the full privileges of a member of the brotherhood. In this way the ceremony of initiation has the same key-

THE TIGRIS AT BAGDAD

note, differing only in some details. Their religious services also follow more or less the same order. The sheikh first chants certain verses from the Koran, the dervishes from time to time bursting in with one of the seven exclamations, or during pauses repeats "Ya Allah" or "Ya Khuba." In some of the communities during this chant all are seated on their heels rocking the whole body from right to left (or in some orders the reverse) in rhythmic motion. Some begin the ceremony standing and continue it sitting; others begin standing, joining hands and swaying the whole body in unison. The order of Rufai, or, as they are known to Europeans, howling dervishes, and Mevlevie, or whirling dervishes, are the most wealthy. The first was founded by Said Ahmed Refai, who died in 1188 of our era, and the second by Dgelal-ed-Khunkeir, who died in Koniah in 1273. Their services are rather different from that of the others.

The Rufai divide their service into five several parts. In olden times they often went into such ecstasies that they seized in their hands red hot iron and licked it, and cut themselves with knives. Such extremes are now rare.

The order of Mevlevie has a peculiar form of initiation. During one thousand and one days the neophyte has to pass through a most severe probation. Whatever his birth, he is obliged to do the hard work in the kitchen, whence he is styled the kara kulukhchi, or black workman. If during this term the candidate omits one day or spends one night outside the walls of the tekke he has to begin all over again. At the end of the one thousand and one days the head cook, or aschi bashi, presents the neophyte to the assembled dervishes. The candidate goes to the sheikh, kisses his hand and then seats himself opposite to the sheikh, and next the cook. The sheikh then removes from the candidate his head-dress and recites verses attributed to the founder of their order: "True happi-

ness and true greatness consist in closing the ear to all human passions, and the fruit of this is the overwhelming power that is given by the blessing of the Prophet." After this the sheikh places the headdress on the neophyte and he and the cook withdraw to the centre of the room, where they modestly seat themselves, that is with folded hands and heads bent on the left side. The sheikh then addresses the aschi bashi in the following terms: "May the labour of thy brother dervish be acceptable to the Ever-existing and to our Pir. May his praise be increased in this nest of his obedient followers, in this cell of the poor. Recite the Khubain in honour of our Mevlian." The assembly cries aloud "Khuba!" and the ceremony is at an end.

Not entering into the exceedingly mystic teachings of these cults, it is sufficient to say that in the origin of all lies the one desire common to all, that of glorifying God, not only from the heart and through speech, but by the outward movements of the body that represent to them a harmonious idea of God. This is expressed in various forms of exaltation, beginning from swaying the body, and ending in knocking the head against stone walls, licking hot iron or in hysterical fits.

The dervishes live, as has been said, in communities called tekkes, where they are under the absolute control of the sheikh. Each tekke possesses gifts in the form of real estate from the sultan and other rich Moslems, the income of which goes to the support of the dervishes who live in common tekkes or in individual cells. The married live in private houses but are obliged to be at the tekke on the eve of the day when services are held there. As they receive only food and lodging at the tekkes and have to clothe themselves, most dervishes are obliged to have some profession. Begging is strictly forbidden to all except the cult of Bakhtashiyah, whose rules require

them to live only by what is given them. Their formula of begging is "Shean l'illah," which means, "Something, for God's sake."

It is permitted to any member to leave an order, but this is seldom done. Many Moslems consider the orders of dervishes as profanation of the teachings of Mohammed. Occasionally even there is a persecution of dervishes. Such was the case during the reign of Sultan Mohammed IV., but they were saved owing to two circumstances. First, because the founders of these cults were in every instance persons of high standing in the Moslem world, and secondly, the fact that, according to the Moslem belief, the Mohammedan religion is upheld by three hundred and sixty-six living saints, or holy ones, who must exist as long as does the Moslem religion, and the belief that most of these individuals are to be found among the dervish communities. In the estimation of the public most of the saints are endowed with miracle-working powers, and this can be seen even now in the order of the Rufai when after the service little children, sometimes nursing babes, and sick folk are brought and laid down for the sheikh to pass over. The sheikh walks over their prostrate bodies, stepping on each one, often even stopping to change from one foot to the other on the same person without apparently giving any pain. Other sick persons are seated in front of him, and he, fixing the patient with his eye, gazes long and intently into the patient's face and finally blows on him to exorcise the evil spirits. The sheikh also gives amulets, charms and other medical treatment.

Among other orders the sheikhs are supposed to have power over snakes, which is passed down upon each successor. These sheikhs are often called in to free a house which has become infested with serpents.

There are also travelling dervishes; but these are

mostly persons who have been expelled from some community. Among such dervishes were the kalandars of olden times that are so often mentioned in the "Thousand and One Nights." The founder of this order was a Spanish moor from Andalusia, Kalandar Joseph Andalousie. He was a pupil of Becktash and afterwards being expelled from this community organised the order of Kalandars, travelling dervishes who live by begging. One comes across such travelling dervishes all over the East, especially in Persia and central Asia. They simply live a tramp's life justified by the guise of dervishes. They are mostly opium smokers, and in general occupy themselves in ways quite foreign to the requirements of any religious cult whatsoever.

It is a common sight in Persia to see one of these parasites installed in front of the gate of some great man. Sometimes the dervish pitches a tiny tent, makes himself a miniature garden and sits all day begging in an arrogant rather than an humble way. These dervishes often resort to dramatic means of forcing alms. We once found one fastened by the neck to the balustrade of our stairs, and he announced that he would remain there, even if he starved, until we gave him something. Another dervish settled himself in front of our gate, where he ploughed, with a tiny model of the wooden ploughs used in the East, a few square inches of the unpaved street. This plot he sowed with grain and then announced that he would remain until the grain sprouted, grew, ripened, was harvested, and finally was threshed and ground into flour, if before that time we had not given him a certain sum. In most cases when it is a Moslem before whose house these dervishes encamp, repeating in menacing tones "Ya Hak," belief—or rather, a half-superstitious fear of the supernatural power of calling down curses that these wild men may possess—generally obtains for them what they demand.

CHAPTER II

IN MESOPOTAMIA, THE PORTALS OF THE DESERT

Desert Politics—Our Caravan—Goanese—Mendoza and Fernando—Hamdanie and Seglawie—Character of Mesopotamia—Nefuds—Duradji—Ceremony of Meetings in the Desert—In Camp—Original Adventures of Turks with Arabs—Ancient Canals—Duradj Shooting—At the Wells—First Acquaintance with the Daughters of the Desert—The Disappearance of Ahmed—His Reappearance—Unexpected Results of Medical Treatment—Blood Feuds.

A JOURNEY into the desert is accompanied by many hardships and privations, and those who care first and always for their own ease and comfort will do best not to undertake it. But those who care for new impressions are interested in the nomadic life of the desert, and in visiting the traces of the ancient civilisation that are to be found all through this part of the country, will feel amply rewarded for any physical privations and sufferings they may encounter.

After passing the summer in the dark and stuffy "serdabs" the reader can understand how, with the approach of the cool season, we longed for the freedom of the desert, and all those who are able to do so make plans for an excursion, and my wife and I are among these fortunate ones. We endeavour to unite pleasure with profit. I wish to get some personal acquaintance with the Arab tribes surrounding us and to have some shooting: and my wife is interested in the ruins, or rather the traces now to be found, of Babylon and the four ancient cities built by Nimrod, "the mighty hunter before the Lord."

After many-sided considerations and consultations the plans for our journey are made. Waterskins are bought, the tents and camp furniture overhauled, saddles and guns put in order, and last, but certainly not least, the present state of desert politics is ascertained from various sources. For even a desert has its politics, the importance of which the traveller who disregards them finds to his cost. We were obliged to find out the relations of one tribe to another, between which ones was war or peace, and if our guides would be able to safely pass with us from one to another. After being sure of a safe conduct and guarantee of peace, then, and only then, could we start with security.

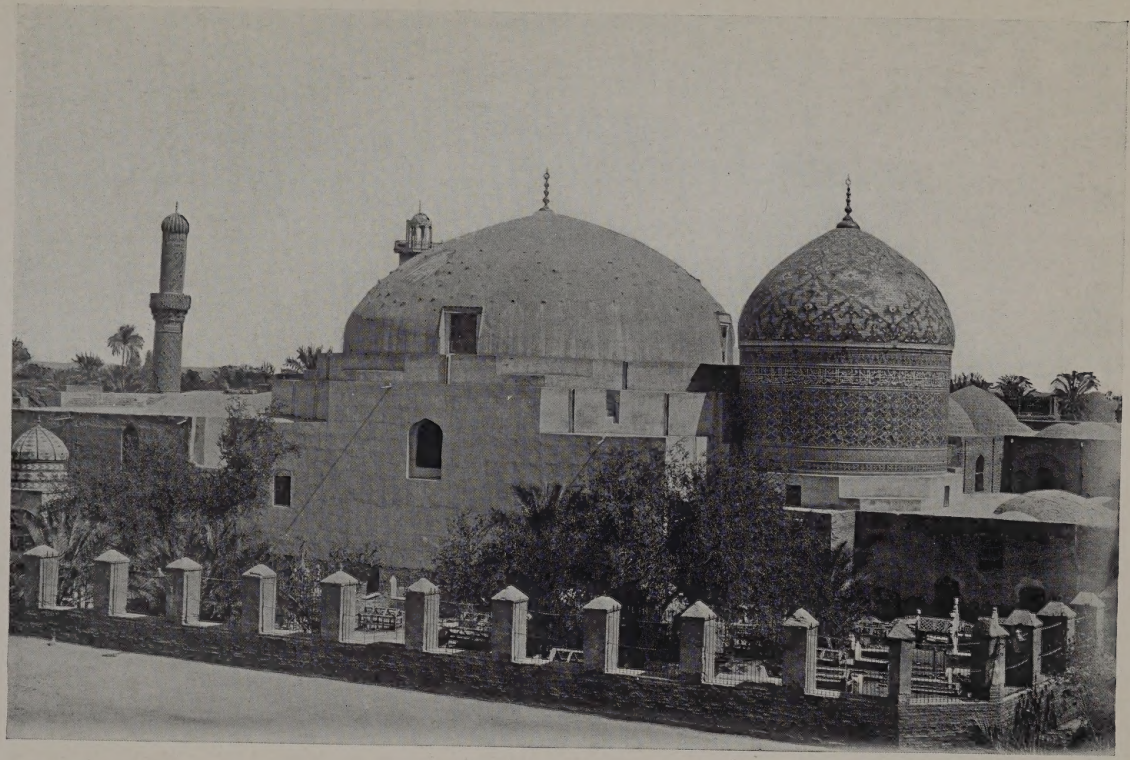
To be quite correct I informed the local vali, or governor general, of my contemplated trip. He, like all Turkish valis, was infected by the mania of suspicion, and also doubtless realised that in case of trouble in the desert he was quite powerless to save my precious life, and so tried by every argument possible to dissuade me from my project. Failing in this, he offered me an escort, knowing in advance that I would decline, and then, having fulfilled all his official obligations and cleared himself from every responsibility, gave a sigh of relief, and, wishing each other all blessing, we parted in mutual satisfaction.

At last all was ready, and the day of departure fixed. Our caravan consisted, besides ourselves, of Karim, our caravan bashi, or leader of the caravan, three grooms, sixteen pack horses carrying our tents, kitchen, provisions, barley for the horses, and water. Three beaters, four Arabs to act as guides and at night to watch the camp, our butler Mendoza and cook Fernando, the latter Indian Portuguese, devout Roman Catholics we had brought up from Bombay with us. Not to be omitted was Ahmed, a city-born Arab, a simple-minded water carrier, the butt of all the practical jokers in the caravan. In all we mus-

tered fifteen souls and thirty-one horses, counting our own mounts.

In passing, a few words about our Portuguese men may be of interest. They were both from Goa, the Portuguese colony with a capital of the same name. Goa is on the Indian Ocean and south of the Bombay Presidency; it has a fair haven and has a certain pathetic interest as being the last representative of the palmy days of Portuguese colonial and maritime might that dated back to the sixteenth century, as many towers and ruined strongholds scattered all through the Persian Gulf bear witness. At present the inhabitants of the entire colony of Goa are estimated at about half a million, mostly Catholics, the descendants of the converts of the apostle to the Indies, Francis Xavier, one of the founders of the Jesuit order who laboured and died in Goa. The Goanese are mostly half-castes, tracing their descent with great pride to the early conquerors and Indian mothers. But as in later years there was little addition of European blood, the present Goanese bear few traces of their white ancestors. They are bronze in colour, with black curly hair, flat noses, and remind one more of the Negro type than European. Their origin is betrayed only by their names, de Sousa, de Gama, Cortez, etc. They are excessively proud of their forefathers, and in contracting marriages the name counts for as much as in the proudest time of the Spanish and Portuguese grandees. The jealousy with which these families keep apart is evidently begotten by the strong caste spirit prevailing throughout India. Goa is a poor colony, the principal industry being the cultivation of rice, but in such meagre quantities as to barely serve for their own consumption. Cocoanuts and braided mats are about the only items of export. Naturally, therefore, the men are forced to seek work outside the country, the better class serving mostly as cooks, butlers and musicians to the

English in India, and with whom they get scattered to many parts of the world. Though separated in this way from their families, sometimes for years, they yet keep in close and tender touch with them, as nearly all can write. Our two servants, for instance, kept up a regular correspondence with their families during all the years that they were with us, and, as we had occasion to know, faithfully sent them all their earnings except just what they actually needed for their own expenses. There were a good many of these people in Bagdad as servants, and if any one of their number was sick, or out of work, they all clubbed together to help him during that time and to get him a situation. They are generally excellent servants, knowing their profession thoroughly, thanks to their training. For instance, to get the position of butler they first have to go through a course of several years as cook, which makes them invaluable as butlers, for in India the heat makes it impossible for a European housekeeper to enter into the details of kitchen and shopping, and these capable men are able to take all the responsibility. It is true that one often finds among them such as are given to drink, but if one is fortunate, as we were, in finding sober Goanese, they have the best servants in the world. We have the warmest recollections of our faithful men, Mendoza and Fernando, who during the many years they were in our service never once gave us occasion to find fault with them. Always good-natured and willing, and very adaptable in all surroundings—provided the climate was warm—they often proved themselves invaluable to our comfort. During trying journeys when women servants would only be a burden, Mendoza turned nurse, and a more tender or efficient one with the baby would be difficult to find. But in cooler countries the Goanese find it difficult to live, and our Mendoza began to cough in Constantinople in the month of October with the tempera-



MOSQUE OF SHEIKH ABDUL KADIR

ture at 70° F., and against our mutual inclinations we were obliged to part with him and send him home.

But we have with us other inseparable companions in our desert wanderings, our pure-blooded Arab horse, "Hamdanie," that my wife rides, and my own "Seglawie," both descendants of two of the five famous mares belonging to the Prophet Mohammed (may whose ashes rest in peace, Alie-hu-salam). The Arabs consider as pure bred only the five strains whose pedigree can be traced back to these five mares, two of which were called respectively Hamdanie and Seglawie. It is wonderful how unhesitatingly an Arab will recognise a horse belonging to any of these strains. More than once, when passing some Arab encampment for the first time, we heard the Arabs, on seeing our horses, exclaim:

"Hamdanie, Seglawie!" and adding "Mashallah!" (God's will), the highest form of praise and also a formula warranted to keep off the evil eye which praise might draw on the horses.

At last the day set for our departure arrives. Long before dawn we are picking our way through the narrow, dirty streets of sleeping Bagdad, and are soon at the pontoon bridge crossing the Tigris. On the right bank of the river we find ourselves in Mesopotamia. When as yet a child, pictures of the desert would present themselves very vividly to my mind as a vast plain of rolling sand, broken by occasional oases. In reality all the desert that lies between the rapid, muddy Tigris and the clear sparkling stream of her sister, the Euphrates, can only be called a desert on account of the absence of cultivation and irrigation. But the soil is of the richest loam, capable of being transformed into a blossoming garden during certain seasons of the year. At high water, during the months of February and March, the tract between the two rivers forms a veritable lake, the

home of flocks of water fowl. The water, to be sure, is not deep, from a foot to eighteen inches, and when it subsides the desert becomes covered with the most luxuriant carpet of grass and flowers, which, alas! dry up in May, and again the term desert is not out of place. With comparatively little pains and expense all of Mesopotamia could again be the fertile country it was in the time of the hanging gardens. As the summer advances with its fierce heat, the soil becomes dry, and crossed by great cracks covered here and there with bits of dried grass or forlorn-looking bushes, and once this place was covered with forests that passed entirely away only in the last century!

It is only west of the Euphrates that the desert proper begins, the El-Hamud, and south of it the great Nefud, answering to my early conceptions of it. Here for hundreds of miles stretches the vast, sandy desert, with its horseshoe-shaped dunes, such as those seen in Transcaspia, through which with almost superhuman struggle the railway was built between the Caspian and Bokhara. Here one finds the real desert the symbol of death, and it is with no feeling of surprise that the traveller notes the skeletons of camels and perchance of human beings that mark the whole way down to Nejd, the cradle of the Arab and the home of the real Bedouin.

We move on slowly but gaily until about ten o'clock the sun begins to make itself felt and we think of calling a halt. A suitable spot found, a tent is quickly pitched and the cooks are busy about their improvised stoves. At two o'clock, after a good rest, and after having watered our horses from the skins carried with us, we start on again in order to reach the first wells before night. The landscape continues to present the same monotonous features; here and there are to be seen dry shrubs, or such bushes as have long roots that reach down to the moisture of the lower strata.

"Duradji!" suddenly cries out one of our beaters, slipping quickly off his horse and running toward some bushes just off the track. Picking up the corners of his burnoose and flapping them, he runs round and round in ever narrowing circles and continuing to wave his cloak.

"Where is the duradj?" I ask, overtaking the Arab.

"Here," he says in a stage whisper. "Look under the bush—see, he is turning his head—shoot! for Allah's sake, Effendi, shoot!" And he continues breathlessly to circle and to wave his burnoose. The sweat rolled in drops from the poor man, who fairly trembled in his anxiety to make me see and kill this coveted desert game, a bird reminding one somewhat of our grey partridge. But try as I might I could not see the duradj, although in our northern woods I could easily distinguish a wood hen crouching on the bough of a tree, which, as all sportsmen know, is not an easy thing to do.

"Can't you see it, Effendi?" imploringly whispers the Arab again, and then in despair throws himself with outspread burnoose flat on to the little bush, hoping to catch the bird in his hands, but it slips out and takes to flight. I raise my gun and fire twice, but the bird sails merrily off, and the Arab, breathing heavily, gazes at me with eyes full of mute reproach.

There are many duradji to be found in these places, and the Arabs have an original way of their own in hunting them, based on the known timidity of the bird. As soon as their sharp eyes spy the game, an almost impossible thing for a stranger to do at first, as its plumage is the exact colour of the desert sand, the "sportsman" gets between his victim and the sun and begins to advance, flapping his burnoose. The bird, taking the shadow thus cast for a huge bird of prey, crouches flat against the earth.

The Arabs are very economical of using powder and so charge their guns with less than half a thimbleful of powder and with very little shot, and then, to avoid any chance of missing, circle up till they are within touch almost of the crouching bird and fire. Naturally, with such a small charge, this is the only way of killing a bird, and the danger of missing at such close range is not very formidable.

We overtake the caravan and go on for another couple of hours. The sun begins to sink and the breeze to have a little coolness that freshens up the whole party, including the horses. Suddenly the caravan bashi reins up his horse and rising in his stirrups shades his eyes with his hand and gazes intently into the distance. One of the guides rides up to him and both study the horizon, carrying on an animated discussion. It seems they have discovered horsemen coming towards us. I strain my eyes and see absolutely nothing but the rolling desert. My wife can see nothing, neither do our Indians nor the town-bred Ahmed. A few minutes pass and our Arabs count fifteen riders, and yet we can distinguish nothing!

The keen eyes of these Arabs are wonderful. Their life in the wide expanse of the desert, where their very existence often depends upon their farsightedness, enabling them to discover an enemy, or a bit of green marking water at a great distance, develops their vision as it does in the case of the Turkomans and Kirghizes of central Asia.

After some time I see dots on the horizon that gradually become more distinct and begin to take shape. At last we are near enough to make out the colour of the horses. Our escort unsling their berdans and lay them across the saddle in front of them and we continue slowly to approach each other.

"Jereffa!" (the name of an Arab tribe) suggests one of our men.

"No, Shamars!" says our caravan bashi.

But hardly are the words out of his mouth when the strangers put their horses to a run and with spears balanced sweep down upon us like the wind. Our caravan bashi gallops forward to meet them and we all follow his example with more or less sinking of the heart, and Mendoza and Fernando, whose bronze skins are incapable of turning pale, become a bluish yellow. The cook gallops madly on, with his pots and kettles beating an accompanying jingle in the saddle bags. We tear on for some rods, when, as we approach each other, both parties stop short as if by command—all excepting poor Fernando, who continues his way flying over the horse's head and after turning one or two somersaults in the air sits up on the ground blinking in amazement, while everyone is too much occupied to take any notice of him. Both parties stand within twenty feet of each other in silence for a few seconds.

"Who are you? Where from? Whence going, and why?" etc.

Our caravan bashi satisfies their curiosity and then in turn cross-examines them. It appears that the strangers are Shamars, going to carry on some negotiations with another tribe and are peaceably inclined. These preliminaries being at an end and both parties being relieved, we become quite sociable. We give them all the city news and they give us that of the desert. The sheikh of such and such a tribe is ill; another is preparing for his marriage with the daughter of the sheikh of a neighbouring tribe, and therefore there is hope of an alliance and friendship between these tribes instead of the enmity long existing among them. This alliance, and all the possible results arising from it, are gravely and exhaustively dis-

cussed by both parties. Then water is offered to the newcomers, and with many good wishes and consigning each other to the care of Allah, we continue our several ways.

This is the usual desert way of meeting with everyone the traveller encounters, either friend or foe, according to circumstances or the politics of the day. But it is not always that these encounters end as peaceably as did ours. Often the spears are brought into play and with the blunt end the rider is unhorsed (the real Arab rides without a saddle), and according to the desert law the horse becomes the property of the more skilful or lucky party. Occasionally, but rarely, these affairs have a bloody end.

But here it is sunset, and we have reached our wells, but alas, there is no water! We find, too, that our brilliant water carrier has forgotten to bring the ropes so necessary for procuring water from these deep wells! All our men, with rare unanimity, fall upon the unlucky man, calling him the "father of stupidity" and the "father of a donkey," and so overwhelm him with reproaches that the poor fellow finds no answer. For the present his carelessness affects us less since there is no water in any of the wells, and we shall have to make what the skins contain do for ourselves and a small quantity for each horse, and for to-morrow we will see—if we find wells we can perhaps make the horses' halters do service.

The camp is soon taking on shape, tents are going up, Fernando is rattling his pots merrily and blowing his fire, Mendoza is putting up camp beds and setting out the folding chairs, while the grooms are unsaddling the horses and getting the leg ropes ready. In a little over an hour our supper is ready and then around the various camp fires begin low-toned conversations, mostly turning on the events of the day's march, of desert and hunting episodes of the present vali and the various Arab tribes.

I always love this hour. Sitting at the door of our tent in my easy camp-chair, under the bright stars and listening to their chat, I often get much that is useful as to the ideas and ways of thinking of these people, and of their judgment of events of local interest.

At an early hour the next morning the caravan is moving. For miles we follow the lines of gigantic canals that bear silent witness to the high state of culture once enjoyed by these lands. Along these canals, still deep enough in places to hide a horse and his rider, the growth of bushes becomes almost like a low jungle.

Suddenly we hear a characteristic cry and whizz, a duradj raised by one of the dogs. I spring from my horse, throwing the reins to one of the men, and run into the brush. Whizz—dash—another duradj! I fire and miss. Another, with the same result, but finally luck turns and I have a pair of beauties for our supper. I retrace my steps to where the man is holding Seglawie, and we gallop on to overtake the caravan, and hand over the birds to Fernando, whose bronzed face shines with pleasure as he takes them, saying in his broken English:

"Nice roast, sir."

We come to some wells, where we camp, intending to make this our headquarters while exploring the vicinity, and later to go on and visit some of the nomadic tribes that interest me. The sun seems hotter and harder to bear than usual, and our horses, that have received but a few swallows of water, are lagging heavily, when the sight of the wells rouses them as well as ourselves. As we draw near to the wells we see Arab women who have come from a near encampment for water. We see them drawing up water in leather buckets by means of ropes, but as soon as they spied us they fled, and, what interested us most, carrying with them the ropes on which we had set our eyes. This roused our men to a fresh at-

tack upon the unlucky Ahmed. We dismount and on examining the wells find them to be extremely deep, and a discussion arises as to whether all our horses' ropes united will suffice. But feminine curiosity comes to our aid. The sharp eyes of our caravan bashi discover the figures of the women crouching in the brush and eagerly watching us. But no amount of coaxing nor compliments would induce them to lend us their ropes, and when one of our men showed intentions of going nearer to them, these wild daughters of the desert fled like gazelles and came to a stand again among the bushes at a distance. Some one suggested making a flank movement and surrounding them, but in view of the complications sure to arise from such decided measures, this plan was dropped. Finally my wife suggested her going alone and trying to convince them of our good intentions, and as proof of which, to offer them some coins that are understood even in the desert. Whether it was the eloquence of my wife or the effect the sight of the money had, the result was that in a quarter of an hour she returned in triumph accompanied by four women. In less time than it takes to tell, the ropes were lowered, the horses, fully understanding the significance, snorting and pulling at their bridles to get nearer the well, where a drinking trough had been made by the Arabs by digging a hollow basin and plastering it with mud. The water proved to be tolerably good, though it had a decidedly earthy taste, but we were all too thirsty to be critical. Filling our water skins, we move on for about a quarter of a mile, where we camp. The tents are soon pitched, a hurriedly prepared meal done justice to, and we give ourselves up to a luxurious rest, idly listening to the conversation carried on between our own men and the Arab guides. They are discussing the defeat of the Turks by the Shamar tribe that had taken place a few years previously. This tribe,

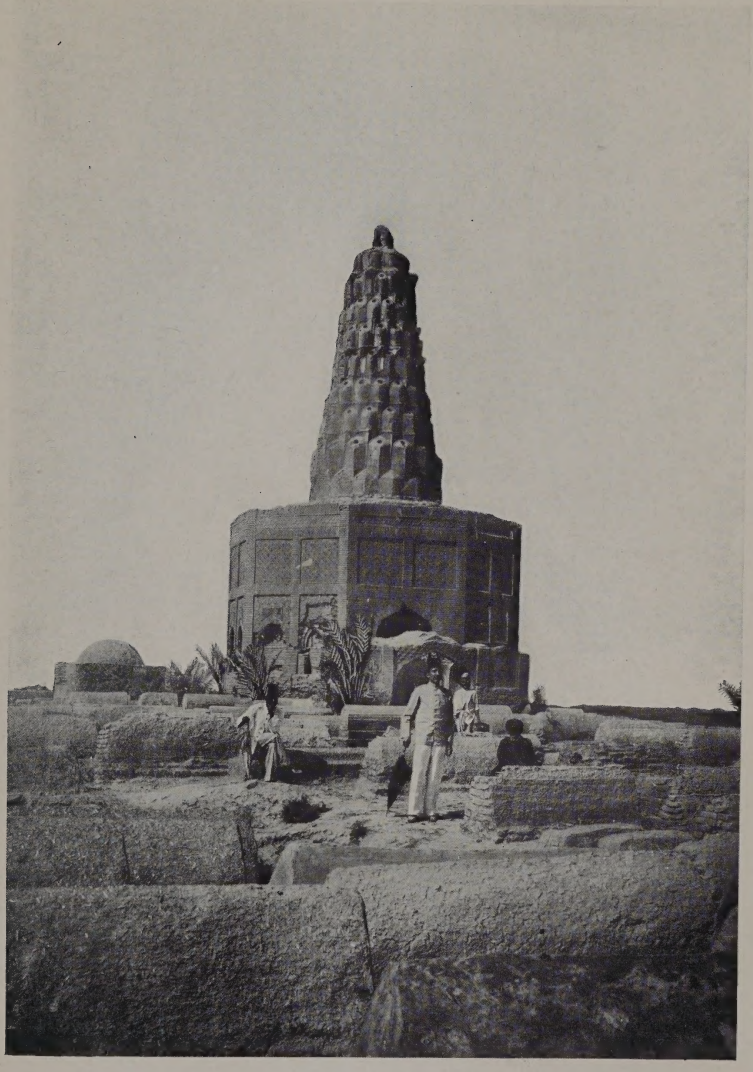
it seems, refused to pay a tax that the Turks had levied upon them and orders had come for a company of regular Turkish troops to march into the desert and forcibly collect the tax. The troops hesitated to enter the desert, where the Arabs were at home, while the troops would need large quantities of provisions, fodder, water, etc. At that time the Arabs were armed principally with spears and muskets, rifles being seldom met with. But the fact of their being as familiar with the desert as with their five fingers, immured to hardships, and they and their horses possessing great powers of endurance, being able to make seventy-five miles without water, and sustaining life on a handful of dates—the main article of food for man and beast—gave them an enormous advantage.

The expedition was sent out in the winter, when the nomadic Shamars are encamping near Bagdad, where they come to buy dates, their chief support, as well as coffee and other articles necessary for their simple life. The plan of campaign drawn by the local staff of the Turkish army ended in a fiasco, thanks to a clever ruse that would only enter the head of these desert children. The Arabs in a short time collected over two thousand camels. "The ship of the desert" with all its good qualities is not noted for sagacity, and is easily given to stampeding. At such times it is ready to run for miles in a straight line, regardless of obstacles. When the camels were gathered, the Arabs loaded them with saddle bags filled with sand and approached the Turkish camp during the night. They then made holes in the bags, after which they frightened the camels in a way known to themselves, and stampeded the whole herd, which, accompanied by the shouting Arabs, poured like a flood into the camp, bringing about a confusion and panic that was increased by the dust and sand sifting through the bags. The camels crushed everything in their way as the

cries and confusion of the camp increased their fright. The result was that the entire camp fell into the Arabs' hands without the latter losing a man.

After a good rest and having watered the horses, we start out on an exploring expedition with four of our shikaries, a groom, and Ahmed with his waterskin. We soon come upon some mounds, the site of one of the most anciently recorded cities. Before sunset we have visited a number of these mounds and then turn to go back to camp with some disappointment, for we had expected to see something that at least bore traces of a ruined city.

We are riding quite rapidly when we notice hiding among the bushes an Arab. I have time to get a glimpse of the "kafiyah," the usual head-dress, consisting of a fringed silk handkerchief thrown over the head so as to form a complete shelter, only leaving the face exposed, and held in place by a rope wound round the crown of the head. From under the head-dress the long braided locks that the men wear fall about his shoulders. He approaches Ahmed, who after some talk dismounts and begins to untie the waterskin and to give the stranger a drink. The rest of us push on, thinking of our camp and the welcome supper that by now is awaiting us. I get several shots at duradji on the way, but ill-luck is surely following me, for not a bird drops to my bag until the fifth shot brings down a fine hen. Overtaking the caravan we go on for another half hour, and we come in sight of the white tents of our camp, where the smoke rising from the cook's quarters tells that a good supper is prepared for us. We dismount with that pleasant physical fatigue mingled with a feeling of peace with the whole world, that one only gets from long horseback riding. After a wash we sit in the long camp-chairs at the door of the tent waiting for the supper to be served. As we sit there we hear the soft tinkle of the head bells, mixed with



TOMB OF ZOBEIDA, HAROUN-AL-RASHID'S FAVORITE WIFE

the deep bass dong of the huge bells hung from the camel saddles, announcing an approaching caravan. We watch the "pashang," as the gaily caparisoned leader of the caravan is called, come in sight. A word as to these horses may not be devoid of interest. They are trained to lead caravans and are as proud of their position as any human being could be, and if any of the other horses tries to get ahead, the pashang will resent it and by snapping at him try to head him off and drive back the insolent upstart. However tired after a long march, and however heavy the load, these brave horses will struggle to keep at the front. One we once saw of whose pluck the "charvadars," or muleteers, had taken an unfair advantage and loaded with heavy boxes that none of the other beasts could carry. In spite of being so overloaded, the gallant pashang kept at the head of the caravan until blood gushed from his mouth and nose and he finally dropped dead—surely as true a hero as any human being falling at his post of duty.

As the caravan looms in sight we see that each animal is carrying long, narrow boxes that stand out in sharp contrast against the rosy evening sky, and as the long string in single file come out of the gathering dusk, the deep-toned bells fall upon our ears with a weird feeling as of a funeral knell, for all those long boxes are full of the bones, or in some cases the comparatively fresh bodies, of Moslems whose faithful friends and relatives are taking for burial in sacred ground. As the last notes of the caravan bells die away, we are glad to be aroused from the rather grim reflections caused by this procession of the dead, by the cheerful call to supper. I have not had time for more than a swallow of soup that seemed unusually savory when the caravan bashi enters the tent. At the first glance at his face I see that something unusual has happened.

"Effendi," he says, "Ahmed has not come, and his horse has just returned to camp riderless. What are your orders?"

"Where can he be?" I exclaim. "We must send one or two men on horseback to search for him."

"Had we better not wait a bit?" suggested the caravan bashi.

"Who saw him last, and where?"

"That is what I have inquired," answered the man, "and it seems that since he was seen talking with the unknown Arab, who asked for a drink, no one remembers seeing him. We thought he was following on slowly, and were not troubled, but now the horse has come and no Ahmed. There is nothing good to expect from him; he is the father of all stupidity and has probably lost his way—though the stars are out and any child could find the camp," he ended, glancing out at the tent door at the sky, where by this time the stars were shining in all the glory of the Eastern nights. I kept silent, but thought to myself that though not a child, I should not like to be left in the desert to find the camp by such means alone.

It was finally decided to send off at once three horsemen in search of our ne'er-do-well. My wife and I, left to our soup, began to discuss the situation, and the various mishaps that may have come to our unlucky retainer, for the chances of his getting out of any scrape seemed small in view of his abnormal stupidity. And this leads to reminiscences of the various occasions on which he has distinguished himself. A picture rises before us of one night after a dinner party when we, with all our guests in the drawing-room, drinking Turkish coffee, were startled by a terrible crash, as if a whole crockery shop had gone to pieces. On rushing out onto the open veranda to make inquiries we found that Ahmed in his capacity of dishwasher had just emptied a large dishpan of

water from the window into the courtyard below. Now this was strictly forbidden, but probably the joy of breaking rules made him forget that the dishpan contained, besides water, at least a dozen pieces of our best dinner service that had come to grief on the hard stone pavement below!

We spent half an hour—an hour, and a second hour passed in waiting, and at last the caravan bashi returned, leading Ahmed. At first I hardly recognised the man, he seemed smaller, shrivelled and bent, and the few wits he ever possessed had evidently deserted him, for to all our questions he answered by a wholly unintelligible stammering. The caravan bashi suggested a cup of coffee, that Arab panacea for all mental woes, as it is the actual cautery for physical ills. To the coffee my wife and I decided to add some brandy and a dose of bromide from our travelling medicine case. The result of the combination was decided but unexpected. Ahmed promptly went off into a sound sleep and we were forced to leave the unravelling of the mystery until the next day.

Early the following morning on looking out of the tent door I saw Ahmed seated on the ground and surrounded by the entire camp. He had again resumed his usual good-humoured dull look and seemed to be enjoying his unwonted notoriety. I joined the listeners and heard the following account of his adventures.

It seems that the Arab who had asked for water was nearly exhausted from thirst, as he had had nothing to drink for two days. He had been in hiding from some men of a tribe from whom he had carried off a girl and he begged to be saved from their vengeance. Anyone in Ahmed's place could easily have done so by taking the man up behind him and riding after us, for at that time we were yet in sight. Ahmed, however, wasted precious time in aimless questions and so sealed the fate of the poor fel-

low. Seeing that we were at some distance, several Arabs sprang up from the bushes where they had been in hiding so long as we were near, and falling upon their victim with daggers while he was writhing on the ground in his death agony, they cut out his yet palpitating heart, and, dividing it, each man ate a piece; in this way wiping out the disgrace their tribe had suffered. Having satisfied their awful sense of vengeance, the Arabs began to discuss what to do with Ahmed, who had stood, more dead than alive, an unwilling witness of the terrible deed. Some were for killing him for fear he would betray them. Others claimed that it was to their advantage to let him live and tell how their tribe knew how to repay an injury. The latter opinion prevailed and it was decided to spare Ahmed, but he was kept there some time and in the meanwhile his horse had found its way to the camp. They told how they had lain in the bushes all the hours we were there and how on several occasions one or another of our party had almost stepped upon them as they crouched in the bushes. Finally Ahmed was allowed to go free, but he was so horror-stricken by what he had seen and haunted with the fear that the Arabs might change their mind and follow after him and kill him, that his knees shook and often failed him altogether and he would fall. Stumbling and running, he had at last reached the camp in the speechless condition described.

These reminiscences, to one not acquainted with the East and its ways, and the blood feud in particular, may seem almost incredible. But unfortunately they are facts, and during the many years spent in the East I have repeatedly known cases where, under the protection of the law of blood feud, or some other religious prejudices, crimes, even murders, were committed, often passing down from generation to generation, founded on the old doctrine of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth."

I shall have occasion in another chapter to refer in detail to this custom that will place the incident just related in its true light, and if it will not furnish extenuating circumstances, it will at least explain the psychology of such acts.

CHAPTER III

THE RUINS OF BABYLON AND AMONG THE KURDS AND YEZIDIS

Hillah, its Population—Cuneiform Tablets—Ruins of Babylon—The Work of Turning the Euphrates—Ruins of Nimrod or Aker Rouff—Kurds in the Himrin Mountains—Character of Kurds—Invasion of Urumiah by Sheikh Obeidullah—Yezidis—Devil Worshippers—Sect of Ali Allahis.

THE next day we start on to visit the camp of a sheikh of my acquaintance. Two days' march brings us to the small town of Hillah, the administrative centre of the district of the same name. The Euphrates divides this province from east to west, watering it by means of canals. One, the Mekhoul, was dug by Haroun-al-Rashid, the other, Nahr, by the Persian Shah Abbas the Great. Aside from these there are about ten other canals of ancient date. Thanks to this artificial irrigation palm groves are met with quite frequently, and in the district of Hillah it is estimated that there are as many as half a million date palms. All of the dates raised here are consumed by the Arabs of two tribes, the Shamar and Aneizeh, who migrate towards Hillah in the autumn to buy their year's supply.

The population of this district does not exceed thirty thousand, while in the city of Hillah itself there are not more than eight thousand souls. All the houses are one-storied and mostly built of bricks taken from the ruins of Babylon. The city is greatly spread out owing to the fact that nearly every house is surrounded by its garden

KURDISH WARRIORS

of palms, lemon, orange and pomegranate trees. The city f Hillah is divided into two parts by the Euphrates, across which a pontoon bridge is thrown.

The city occupies the site of the ruined city of Babylon, which was explored at a comparatively recent date, 1848, by Layard. From that time, thanks to discovering the key to the cuneiform inscriptions, the archæologists have been able by deciphering the many cylinders and other inscriptions found in the excavations to get a pretty clear idea of the peculiar but high culture achieved at that epoch. The cylinders that are found in such numbers are generally contracts of sales and give the date and name of the king during whose reign the transaction took place. These cylinders can be bought anywhere in Bagdad and Hillah, but an amateur can easily get a worthless purchase, as they are cleverly imitated. Even if a genuine one is bought its intrinsic value depends upon whether the date and the name of the king mentioned throw any new light on already known dynasties or events.

The city's history practically begins with the royal house called the Dynasty of Babylon, consisting of eleven kings who reigned in all about 290 years, beginning approximately 2,000 years before Christ. Babylon reached the apogee of its glory during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. According to Herodotus, who lived a century later, the city was built on both sides of the river in the form of a square, each side being nearly sixteen miles long. It was surrounded by a moat and wall, the latter pierced by 100 gates; the walls were 87 metres high and 17 broad. All the principal buildings were constructed of bricks made with bitumen. These bricks bore Nebuchadnezzar's name in cuneiform character and according to archæologists belong to two periods, the beginning and end of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. Bitumen was

brought, according to Herodotus, from Isa, the modern Hit on the Euphrates. Bricks with Nebuchadnezzar's seal are to be found in many towns, Kufa, Bagdad and other places, where they are brought from the ruins of Babylon. In 1892 the Turkish Government with the help of French engineers turned the waters of the Euphrates back into their former bed that they had left for a distance of several hundred miles. In forming dams for this work these bricks were used, a fact that will probably cause much discussion and confusion among archæologists of the future centuries who may discover this work. I happened to visit this place and saw the engineering work, in which several thousand Arabs were employed. Their camp at night presented a most unique sight; there were no tents or huts for so many, and as the Arabs are very sensitive to the cold, when the nights became cool each man dug himself a hollow, and buried himself for the night all but his head in the warm sand. The result was that on a moonlight night the camp looked like a huge field covered with melons.

The ruins of Babylon impress the traveller by their vast extent; not that there are buildings or walls or gates, but that for hours one can ride over mound after mound that was once the site of a building. The largest of these mounds are four. The first, to the southeast of Hillah, is called Birs-Nimrod, or the Tower of Nimrod, identified, possibly erroneously, with the Tower of Babel, "whose top was to reach to heaven," and where the miracle of the confusion of tongues took place. This mound is 195 feet high, and all that is left of the wall of the tower are 36 feet in height. According to Strabo the height of this tower was about 600 feet. During the reign of Nebuchadnezzar the tower was called the Seven Spheres and was used as an observatory.

The second large mound, south of Hillah on the left

bank of the river, is called Babel, "the gate of the gods." This heap of ruins has served as a brick quarry for the last two thousand years. The Arab tribe of Babel, considered by some to be the descendants of the ancient Babylonians, has enjoyed the exclusive right of selling the ancient bricks excavated from this mound for use as building materials.

The third mound, Kasir, or Palace, is also to be found on the left bank of the Euphrates. There are here traces of a huge palace of the time of Nebuchadnezzar. This mound is no less than 4,875 feet in circumference.

Lower on the same bank is the fourth mound, called Amran, where the famous hanging gardens were supposed to have been. After the time of Alexander of Macedon this was used as a burial place, the dead being placed in arched galleries upon which it is supposed the hanging gardens were constructed centuries before, in the form of terraces. Here is shown one of the many tombs of Abraham, over which, at a late date, a mausoleum, crowned by a cupola, has been erected.

From a distance all these mounds look like low hills rising out of the flat desert. On examination they seem to be heaps of rubbish with only here and there a bit of wall or tower that has been disclosed by the excavations. To gather any just impression of the extent of these mounds one must remember that Babylon had a length of about 16 miles on each of its four sides, representing an area of 256 miles. The excavations carried on here have not given us great results in stone monuments, as in this alluvial plain stones were not to be had, but were brought from Persia, Egypt and Arabia. This explains the clay cylinders, mentioned above, which have been the principal means of casting light upon the darkness of the far past. American and German archæological expeditions are making excavations in these districts and are

constantly making new and valuable additions to our knowledge of the history of this country.

To dwell upon the wonderful work done by archæologists of various nationalities, here and in other parts of Mesopotamia, would take me far beyond my knowledge and the modest range of this book. If I have mentioned Babylon at all, it is only to speak of it as we saw it, with the interest that such historical places must have for all travellers.

Turning our backs to the Euphrates we start on the last stage of our expedition, which is to visit the Himrin Mountains before the rainy season sets in. This range runs along the Persian frontier for almost three hundred and fifty miles until the point where the Tigris receives its left tributary, the Little Zab. The hills rise on an average only some five hundred feet, and are inhabited by Kurds, an interesting people with whom we had already become acquainted in Persia. The way is long, as we intend to make a detour to visit the ruins of Aker Rouff, known to the Arabs as "the palace of Nimrod." These ruins disappoint us, as they are only groups of huge formless pillars rising to a height of some hundred and forty feet, and built of sundried brick between which are occasional layers of reeds. Approaching the Himrin range, we enter the Turkish provinces of Suleimanieh, Kerkouk, and Tauk, which are inhabited by Kurds.

The Kurds occupy an enormous area of nearly one thousand five hundred square miles, stretching from Ararat and Urumiah on the north down to the middle of the length of the Tigris and the valley of its tributaries, the Little and Great Zabs. The mountain region inhabited by them touches the Russian frontier, then follows the Perso-Turkish frontier south, and it is a more or less inaccessible mountain region, watered by streams that secure good pasturage for the flocks of sheep kept by all

Kurds. Though possessing villages in which they spend the winter months, the Kurds are half nomads, following their flocks as they need change of pasturage. The country occupied by them, and known as Kurdistan, lies as seen partly in Persia, partly in Turkey. Being for many months of the year quite inaccessible it has been possible for those people to preserve even in our day their wild, practically independent state, easily slipping from one country to the other as their lawlessness makes it inconvenient to remain in the one. Kurdistan is so divided that a greater number of the Kurds live in Turkey and the smaller number in Persia. The frontier between the two countries was settled in a treaty drawn up in 1639 by Sultan Murad IV. and Shah Sefi, and later on it was more definitely traced by a special commission including Russian and English delegates, that was formed after the treaty of Erzerum in 1851. The result of this last commission was the establishment of a *status quo* that has of late years given rise to much controversy.

In Turkey the Kurds are mostly settled on the plateau of Van and the vilayets of Diarbekir and Erzerum, Mosul, and in parts of Bagdad. In Persia they are the predominating inhabitants of Soujbulak and Ushnuk and Kermanshah.

In Turkey they are estimated to be about 1,500,000 and in Persia 600,000. In Persia Kurds are found in the provinces bordering upon Transcaspia, the provinces of Khorasan, Budjnurd, Kachan and Derigez, where they number as many as 300,000 souls. They were brought to these provinces from Kurdistan in 1600 by Shah Abbas as a counter barrier against the Turkish tribes inhabiting the plain of what is now Transcaspia. Aside from these places Kurds are to be met with elsewhere, but here I will speak only of the tribes that are in Kurdistan proper.

The Kurds call themselves Kurtmanchi. The Turks

and Persians call them Kurds, and the Arabs Kart—Ekart the plural. They have been in these provinces from time immemorial, and Xenophon speaks of them as Karduks. Always a lawless and warlike tribe, these people are a constant menace to their Christian neighbours, the mountain Nestorians and Armenians.

Kurds are divided into sedentary, or Huran, as they are called in Persia, and Ria in Turkey, and the nomadic warriors, Kermanie. The nomads are broken up into many subtribes, governed by begs, or sheikhs, whose local authority is far greater than is that of Arab sheikhs. Kurdish warriors are born horsemen, far excelling the Arabs in this respect. Their horses are undoubtedly of Arab origin, particularly in those parts near Arab countries, but horse-breeding is not carried on with them as with the Arabs, nor do they esteem the breed as much as they do the individual animal. These horses have developed a special type and become a strong shaggy ideal mountain pony, scrambling up steep hills with the surefootedness of the mountain goat. Since the time of the Russo-Turkish war the Kurds are well armed with Martini-Henry rifles, from which at full run they seldom fail in hitting the mark. They can execute with great grace and skill many feats of horsemanship, and present valuable and rare material for cavalry. Their robber instinct is strongly developed, and a traveller in Kurdistan may consider himself fortunate if robbed but once. If no resistance is made, Kurds seldom kill their victims, satisfying themselves with booty.

The various tribes are often at war with each other on the ground of blood feuds. The Kurds are an independent, hospitable people, loving their liberty and true to their given word, or to "bread and salt." Their women have more freedom than those of any other Moslem people and go about with uncovered faces even in the

presence of guests. They, however, have heavier work laid upon them than have those of most Mohammedan countries. On the whole, in spite of their being a nation of robbers, they have many noble qualities that raise them above the Arabs.

The Kurdish costume is very picturesque. It consists of full, white, or highly-coloured trousers, embroidered jackets and mantles. They are fond of bright colours, but harmonise them so well that the result is pleasing to the eye. A Kurdish warrior is a walking arsenal; daggers, revolvers and sword are in his belt; cartridge belts filled with cartridges are sometimes worn across both shoulders, a quick-firing rifle slung over the back, and when mounted a spear is almost invariably carried. Their language belongs to the Aryan group, but it has been considerably modified by the introduction of words from languages of the countries where the peculiar circumstances of their life have thrown the Kurds—in Turkey, Persia and Transcaspia. Among the latter many Russian words are found. The Arabic characters are used in writing.

In spite of their being scattered over three empires, the Kurds preserve a close connection between the various tribes and are capable of uniting when occasion arrives, as was shown in 1880 during my sojourn in Persia when Sheikh Obeidullah invaded that country.

The Russo-Turkish war was just ended and the Kurds found themselves well supplied with rifles that had been in part given to them by the Turkish Government, whose allies they were during the war, and partly picked up on the battlefield. At the opportune moment an energetic and popular man appeared in the person of one of the Kurdish sheikhs, Obeidullah by name, who, uniting the Kurds, dreamed of founding an independent Kurdish kingdom—an enterprise full of risk, and which of course

was not successful, though it gave a great deal of trouble to Turkey, and still more to Persia, causing the ruin of whole villages and the loss of thousands of lives. Sheikh Obeidullah was a remarkable personage. He lived in Turkey a few miles from the Persian frontier in the mountain fastness of a place called Mams-i-deen. Being a sheikh and at the same time a sayid and a man of more than ordinary force of character, he possessed great influence, not only over his own tribes, but over all the tribes of Kurdistan. He held a daily durbar, seated in the summer in the open window of a room on the ground floor of his "palace," and everyone, to the meanest of his subjects, could have a personal hearing. As many as six hundred Kurds would sometimes gather from all parts of Kurdistan for advice, some to have tribal disputes settled, or other complications adjusted. To all of these the sheikh listened patiently and attentively, and his widespread popularity was largely owing to the impartial justice, so rare in the East, that he meted out, together with the broadest hospitality and generosity. He fed all those who came to him on business, helped the poor and gave a refuge to the weak and oppressed. If illness or absence prevented his attending these daily durbars, the duty was relegated to his son.

Carefully laying his plans, Sheikh Obeidullah persuaded the most influential Kurdish sheikhs of Turkish and Persish Kurdistan to join him. Among them was Sheikh Hamza Agha, well known for his cruelty, who had his old scores against the government. To understand what follows it is necessary to bear in mind that that part of Azerbaijan adjoining the Turkish frontier is the plain of Urumiah with a Christian population of Nestorians, or Syrians, supposed by many to be the followers of the Bishop Nestorius condemned for heresy by the Council of Ephesus in 431. By a strange coincidence,

these Nestorians are scattered as are the Kurds on both sides of the frontiers, so that there are Nestorian Turkish subjects, and Nestorians under the Persian Government. The Persian Nestorians, estimated at about 40,000, live in the districts of Urumiah, Salmas, Sulduz, Baradost, Tergawar and Mergawar. In some of these districts Armenians are scattered, to the number of about fourteen thousand souls. The rest of the population consists of Persian Shiites and Kurdish Sunnites. In September, 1880, the Turkish Kurds crossed the frontier, seizing the towns of Ushunuk and Soujbulak and Miandaub, and on their devastating march laid waste scores of villages, killing thousands of Christians and Shiite Persians. Sheikh Obeidullah himself at the head of eight thousand warriors laid siege to Urumiah, that was saved only through the personal influence of an American missionary physician, Doctor Cochran. The latter succeeded in persuading the sheikh to postpone the final assault upon the city, thus giving time for the Persian troops sent from Tabriz to arrive, and the Kurds were repulsed. The sheikh himself, owing to his friendship for Doctor Cochran, did all in his power to protect the Christians, and mercilessly punished those of his fierce followers who were caught pillaging or murdering them. But he was powerless to wholly hold in check his wild savages, who under the influence of fanaticism, revenge, and lust of gain could not be held back from committing indescribable outrages. The invading horde gradually approached Tabriz, the principal commercial centre of the province as well as seat of the heir to the throne. A panic seized Tabriz, and all those who could do so fled. In Teheran the truth was as much as possible withheld from the shah until the Russian and English representatives laid before him all the danger of the situation. A force of twenty thousand was at once sent from Teheran to Tabriz under the

command of the ex-minister of war, Sepah Salar, who at that time, not being in favour with the shah, was occupying the modest post of governor of Kasveen. At the same time Tamur Pasha, the ruling khan of Mak, a province bordering on Russia, marched to the rescue of Urumiah at the head of five thousand men, while at the shah's request the Russian troops moved to the frontier. All this, particularly with the menace of the Russian troops, led to the Kurds gradually withdrawing to the Turkish frontier. As the Kurds evacuated the country, the Shiite population began to take vengeance upon the Sunnites living among them who had taken the part of the Kurds, their co-religionists. Tamur Pasha's men and finally the regular Persian troops joined in this pillaging and massacre, so continuing the ruin of the country. The Persian troops went into winter quarters along the Persian-Turkish frontier. Under pressure brought to bear by the European powers the Porte ordered Sheikh Obeidullah to Constantinople, where he was received with great honour and a palace placed at his disposal. During the Ramadan fast, the sheikh, under the pretext of praying and fasting, withdrew entirely into the privacy of his own apartments. And at the close of Ramadan he was found to be again in his native land! This time it was with great difficulty that the Porte succeeded in taking him, and he was exiled to Mecca, where he died in 1883. Most of the other rebellious Kurdish sheikhs, among them Hamza Agaby, were taken by the Persians by guile and put to death.

The Kurds living in the Sinjar Mountains differ somewhat in their language and customs from those living in the north. In addition they belong to a sect called Yezidis. The followers of this sect can hardly be termed idolaters, Moslems or Christians, though in their belief are clear traces of all these religions. The Mohammedans despise

BIRS NIMROD, OR TOWER OF NIMROD

them as the followers of Yezid, who killed Hassan, and the Christians not without reason consider them to be devil worshippers, while both attribute mysterious ceremonies and orgies to them. The Yezidis on their side hate the Mohammedans, and the Turkish Government has never been able to get them to serve the military term. They occasionally appeal to Christian missionaries, asking to be admitted nominally to some Christian community, with, however, the right of continuing their secret ceremonies. The Yezidis are more inclined towards Christianity than towards Mohammedanism, with which religion the only point of contact is their esteeming Mohammed as a prophet. The Yezidis never call themselves other than by the name of the tribe to which they belong. Furthermore, even the derivation of their name is a mystery. Some consider it to be from Yezid, the name of the kalif who caused the death of Hassan and Hussein, others from the town of Yezd, and a third theory is that it is taken from the Persian word Yazdan—God.

As nearly as it has been possible to learn their doctrine it seems that the Yezidis believe that in the beginning God created from his own essence the sun, moon, stars and angels. The devil, also created by God, rose in rebellion and was cast out. After suffering for seven thousand years, and filling seven vessels with tears of remorse, the devil repented. These tears will on the great day of judgment be used to quench seven fires. God finally forgave the devil and restored him to his place among the angels. Upon this theory they base their authority for worshipping God, the sun, moon and stars as well as the devil. It is easy to trace the influence of the old Persian fire-worshippers in the Yezidi worship of the sun as the origin of all good and of the devil as the representative of evil. The heathen dualism here seen in the worship of both good and evil is founded on the principle that as

the good from its very substance does not need propitiating they attempt only to propitiate the representative of evil in the form of the devil. This is the cause of their being ready to kill anyone who speaks slightingly of the devil. They themselves not only avoid pronouncing the word devil—Sheitan—but any word or sound that may resemble it—they even avoid, if possible, the sound "sh." When obliged to mention the devil they try to get around using his name, substituting such vague phrases as "he of whom ye know," "he who is despised by the ignorant and foolish," or they call him Malek Taus, king of peacocks, the sacred symbol of the devil that is worshipped by them.

The influence of Christianity is shown in their recognising Christ, though not as God's Son, but as an angel. They even have a tradition to the effect that one of their sect, wishing to lessen Christ's sufferings when on the cross, drew out one of the nails. They also have a legend telling how as soon as Christ was born he could speak and even brought to life a man one thousand years dead.

Further, the Yezidis have a ceremony resembling that of christening. The newly born child is laid on a metallic tray on which is the image of the devil in the form of the Malek Taus and thus is immersed in water. Another detail reminding one of Christianity is the partaking at certain times of wine called the "blood of Jesus Christ." On receiving the cup, the hand of the bearer is kissed. They also have something like penance. In case of a quarrel, the one in fault is obliged to express his public repentance.

The Yezidis have a religious and a civil head. The religious head of the Yezidis, their *Pontifia maximus,* called the great sheikh, lives not far from Badri in the village of Sheikh Adi. This title is hereditary. To him are subject all the "pirs," or Kavali, clergy that he or-

dains. It is worthy of note that up to 1875 the Turkish Government accepted without appeal the decisions of this religious head in all civil and criminal cases arising among the Yezidis, and even his right to give the death penalty was recognised up to the date when the Yezidis in Turkey were included in the laws governing other Turkish subjects.

These "pirs" are illiterate, which, however, is not an obstacle to their fulfilling their duties in view of the absence of all sacred books. Their prayers are handed down from father to son verbally, and all their prayers are repeated in a whisper. Prayer at sunrise is obligatory. They have no religious marriage ceremony. A solemn worship of the Melek Taus is annually held in some cave, which ceremonies—according to the Mohammedans—are accompanied by various orgies. These accusations, however, must be accepted with certain reservations, as up to now no facts have been found to prove these statements.

The Yezidis also sacrifice each year thirty sheep to Jesus Christ and eighteen sheep to Mohammed. The clergy are dressed entirely in black, and they alone have the right to wear this colour. It is also forbidden to wear red and blue, and most Yezidis dress in white. The funerals of the clergy are accompanied by much gaiety, dancing and music.

The Sinjar Kurds do not differ in their ordinary life from the other Kurds living in Persia. While the Kurdish Yezidis are to be found scattered throughout the southwest part of Kurdistan, one finds in its northern part as well as in various places in Persia another sect known as Ali Allahis, a branch of Mohammedans that is equally despised by Sunnites and Shiites.

Ali Allahis are literally believers in the divine origin of Ali, though they call themselves Ahli Allah—God's

people, or Ahli Hakk—the people of the truth. While fulfilling the ceremonies prescribed by the Mohammedan religion there is a decided gulf between them, as they do not accept one of the chief dogmas of Mohammedanism, the principle of pure and impure, nor do they recognise the fasts, and in many other ways differ from the parent religion. The foundation of their religion is a pantheism: the incarnation of God in every creature animate and inanimate. This incarnation is particularly recognised in certain persons, as in the Old Testament patriarchs, Moses, Abraham, David and others, and later in Christ. But they regard Ali above all as the incarnation of God's greatest benevolence. All these chosen ones to the number of one thousand and one are called "pirs." Ali is by some identified with Christ, for which reason the Ali Allahis call Christians their elder brothers. They regard light as the highest product of the Deity—its emblem. They believe in the transmigration of the soul to endless time. Together with the rite of circumcision they have a celebration resembling that of the Passover, when they slaughter a lamb as a sacrifice to Ali and drink grape juice.

Their sacred books are in Turkish writing, composed by a certain Sultan Nahanie, who lived in the sixteenth or seventeenth century. Polygamy is seldom met with among them. They have religious meetings that are accompanied by music and singing and also sacrifices are offered.

In regard to their veneration of Ali it appears that according to their belief he above all others is the representative of God and therefore worthy of divine homage, while Mohammed they regard as Ali's forerunner. According to some scholars the Ali Allahis are supposed to have been formerly Christians, but under persecution nominally became Moslems, that they might conceal their

Christianity, and that while worshipping Ali outwardly they really worshipped Christ. As time went on it is supposed that their former faith was lost and finally merged into the actual worship of Ali.

One should further add that the Ali Allahis are subdivided into various sects, according to their preference for one or another of their one thousand and one "pirs." Unfortunately we must confess to as yet knowing very little that is definite regarding this very interesting sect.

CHAPTER IV

EPIDEMICS IN BAGDAD

The Plague Epidemics of the Nineteenth Century—The Diary of a French Consul—Historical Route of Epidemics—A Dinner Spoiled by Dread Tidings—Appearance of Cholera in Bagdad—Population Flees—Life in the Desert—Arabs Attack Us—Punishment of Prisoners—Return to Town—The Further Progress of the Epidemic—The Plague of the Eighteenth Century in Constantinople Described by an Eyewitness—Symptoms—Measure of Prevention—Treatment—Depopulation Caused by Plague—Its Periodical Appearance—Fanaticism One of the Chief Causes Making it Impossible to Fight Epidemics.

TURKISH ARABIA has always been considered the home of two of the scourges of mankind, the cholera and the plague.

Of these the latter was at one time almost endemic and seldom a year passed without its breaking out somewhere among the marshes of the lower Euphrates. But at times the plague appeared in epidemic forms of such violence as to cause devastations so overwhelming as to be difficult for one who had never witnessed such scenes in the Orient even to imagine. The severest outbreak of the nineteenth century was that of 1831, when the city of Bagdad lost over half of its population. In 1849 and in 1877 the plague again appeared, carrying off an enormous number of victims. From that date, possibly owing to different conditions of life, some regard to sanitary measures and comparative cleanliness, the plague has not again visited Bagdad.

During such epidemics the only salvation was in fleeing

from the contaminated towns and villages into the desert, and it is easy to understand the frame of mind and the sufferings of those who fled, as well as of those who were forced to remain in their homes.

We found in Bagdad several survivors of the great plague of 1849, whose experience had left most vivid recollections of the scenes they had passed through. One of my acquaintances on whom we called one hot day received us in his deep dusky serdab, where he showed us were buried with his own hands his father, mother and several brothers and sisters. The servants had died and there was no one left to help him, a lad, the only survivor, to bury the last of his family. And I can vouch for this being not an exceptional case for those dark days, and under the floors of many still inhabited serdabs the bones of the victims of the plague repose.

On account of the general exodus provisions were hard to obtain in the towns and people were obliged to eat whatever they could find. Houses and shops were forsaken, and it is stated that blooded Arab horses wandered ownerless through the streets, picking their way through the heaps of dead bodies, seeking for something to eat.

The dragoman of the French consulate, a worthy old man who had lived through the plague of 1849 and had also buried all his family, told us of a most pathetic diary now in the archives of the French consulate at Bagdad that was kept by the consul during that time. The diary tells of the beginning of the epidemic; how it spread throughout the city and finally attacked the French consulate and the monks. One after another all the monks and the members of the consulate died, until the consul and one servant alone remained. The diary goes on to tell how the sole surviving servant went out in the morning to buy provisions and did not return; evidently he was stricken down, and the writer had no one left to serve him, and at

the same time he complains of feeling badly himself. Later on, he diagnoses his own case as the plague. The final entry, in a shaking hand that rambles all over the page, says: "I can write no more!"

The cholera, too, is a frequent visitor in Turkish Arabia. Some authorities even lean to the opinion that the marshes of the lower Euphrates are capable of giving birth to the microbes and that these epidemics are not necessarily brought in every case from India, as was formerly held. And it seems unreasonable to claim that India is the only cradle of this disease when in other places are to be found the same conditions of climate and soil that give rise to it there. But according to my own observations and from that of data gathered which I will not enlarge upon, there is a great difference between the cholera that had its origin in Turkish Arabia and that brought from India, namely, the former is easily localised and does not spread, whereas that brought from India travels by historical routes, so to speak, and spreads with the rapidity of communication. Coming up by the steamer from the Persian Gulf they follow the river and caravan routes up into Persia and Russia and eventually find their way into western Europe. This was the regular route by which all the cholera epidemics entered Europe up to the time of the opening of the Suez Canal, when the epidemics have travelled by sea and reached Europe sooner than by the old caravan routes.

It was in June, 1889, that we received in Bagdad Indian papers telling of an outbreak of cholera there, but we paid little heed, as the cholera is always in one part or another of that land. In a few weeks we heard of its being in the ports of the Persian Gulf, and about the middle of August it appeared in Bassorah, five hundred miles south of Bagdad.

It so happened that the day we received this news we

OUTSIDE THE CITY WALLS, THE SQUARE OF IMAM AZAM AND
THE CIVIL HOSPITAL OF BAGDAD

had a few friends in to dinner and were sitting on the flat roof lighted by lamps and coloured lanterns, chatting merrily. In passing I will remark that in Bagdad the Indian custom has been adopted of taking one's own butler when invited out. Each guest has his own man standing behind his chair to serve him, or with fan in hand to keep off the myriads of winged creatures that, attracted by the lights, swarm about. There are few sights more picturesque than these prettily decorated European dinner tables surrounded by white women in evening dress and the dusky Goanese, in their immaculate white English mess jackets, standing behind them with palm leaf or peacock feather fans in their hands; and back out of the circle of lights the tall feathery palm trees rising against the brightly starred sky.

During the dinner one of those present received a telegram informing him of the appearance of cholera in Bassorah, and he, fortunately or unfortunately, showed it to us. Instantly a change came over the gay company and appetites most strangely vanished. Though we repeatedly agreed to taboo the subject it was impossible to keep from it, and one or another would constantly refer to what was uppermost in all our minds. It was evident that the shadow of the dread epidemic came over all those present, some of whom we were not destined to meet again.

The climax was reached when at the end ice cream was handed round. One after another declined, and amidst the joking that met each refusal I whispered to our butler to see that the ice was thrown away, that none of the servants should be tempted by it. By the time coffee and liquors were reached a little of the gloom had been dispersed, and when the guests rose to leave we had almost forgotten what had up to then been the chief topic of conversation.

A few minutes after our friends had left the roof our attention was attracted by a noise in the courtyard below, and on looking down we could see by the light of their lanterns our guests grouped at a respectable distance about a prostrate and writhing form. It seems that our unlucky Ahmed had not been able to endure the thought of so much good ice cream thrown away, and rather than have done it had seated himself and conscientiously made way with what had been prepared for half a dozen persons. The results were most natural, as the physician we called in confirmed, and the alarming symptoms had nothing in common with the cholera. The rumour, however, was spread that the first case of the dread disease had taken place in our house, and the next day our street was avoided.

Three or four more days passed, and in the poorer quarters of the town one or more cases were reported, and a few days later the epidemic had seized the whole of Bagdad. At this time the heat was at its height, the thermometer rising to 100 degrees F. in the shade. Epidemics of this kind are always fearful in Oriental countries, but more so in Turkish Arabia than in some places, owing to its intensitiveness and to the way of living, as well as to the form in which the population expresses its grief.

During the hot months rich and poor sleep on the flat roofs, and consequently one is very often an involuntary witness of the sufferings of one's neighbours. And then as soon as a native is dead all the women folks set up a long wail, rising in the night air higher and higher while with the hand they beat on their mouths; the effect is weird in the extreme, and as the epidemic increased we would hear sometimes first from one roof and then from another the dismal cry go up, until our nerves were in a state to make us easy prey to the disease. It proved to be

more than the inhabitants of the unfortunate city could stand, and a wholesale exodus began to take place.

At this stage of the epidemic there were very few recoveries, and cases were reported where death ensued in three to four hours after the seizure. Often in the afternoon we would hear of a funeral of someone we had seen the same morning in perfect health. It is not to be wondered that a panic fell upon the city and everyone was inspired with the thought to flee. Where to was not of much consequence, nor indeed was there much choice; to be sure the desert was open to all, but only along the river banks could water be had.

Each party tried to isolate itself by camping as far as possible from the others, and day by day a steady stream poured out of the doomed city in spite of the great heat, that made living anywhere but in the serdabs a misery; in spite of difficulties in procuring medical help or provisions of any kind, the only thought was to escape from the empty streets, where hour after hour the only living beings seen would be frequent groups of men hurrying along carrying bodies, often in the sheet in which the person had died, seldom in coffins; and to escape from the nights on the roof in that stricken city where sleep was made hideous by the frequent wails announcing a fresh victim.

In three weeks' time the epidemic had reached its height, the grave diggers could not keep up with their work and piles of dead accumulated in the cemeteries. The greater part of the bazaars were closed, and at night the river was dotted with the lights of the many guffas floating down the river with fleeing families who took advantage of the coolness of the night. The administration was hampered in all its sanitary and quarantine efforts by the Moslem belief that all such epidemics are sent as a punishment by God, to fight against which is

sinful. The natives continued to drink unboiled water from the river as well as from basins and cisterns, and to eat fruit and vegetables of doubtful quality. They continued also to bring bodies from outside of the town for burial within the walls, and when the police took severe measures against this they tried in every way to smuggle their dead in. One day the police found in a cart full of vegetables for the market the unwashed body of a cholera victim! This event filled the cup of our long-suffering, and we decided to leave the city. But where to? Our only choice was somewhere along the banks of the Tigris, and we set out to select an isolated spot. The camp and our horses were taken out by land, and my wife and I decided to go by river to avoid passing the graveyards, where, in spite of constant work day and night, bodies were heaped up awaiting burial.

From our house to the water's edge where we took the guffa was but a few minutes' walk, and yet in this short distance we saw several bodies being hurried through the streets to be laid in the grave without a prayer or service of whatever religion they might belong to. Not the least sad of those sad times were these hasty funerals and the nameless graves that were the result.

And so we find ourselves seated on camp-chairs that were placed in the guffa smoothly turning round and round down the Tigris. On both sides of us the banks are dotted with the campfires of those, who like us, have escaped from the terrors behind. As we row on the lights become fewer, and after passing dark banks for some time the lights of our camp come in sight. We settle ourselves in our double Indian tent: the servants in tents made by the Jews in Bagdad, Mendoza and Fernando as Christians having one apart from the Mohammedan servants. We also have with us, aside from our town servants, some Arabs from the immediately sur-

rounding tribe to act as watchmen and to guard us against their own and other tribesmen.

The next day we establish regular communication with the city and something like a quarantine. We arrange a regular course of diet for the whole camp, over the strict observance of which I myself keep watch. We lay in a provision of rice, buy sheep and fowls alive, and commence to drag out our miserable existence under the burning sun far from any shade to protect our tents. It was literally dragging out one's existence and not living. The thermometer in our tent rose to 100° F., and then, our pet monkey breaking it, we never knew how much higher it might have gone. One became dizzy and faint from the heat, and green circles seemed to swim before our eyes—a bad sign! We kept cold compresses on our heads and counted the hours till the setting sun would free us from the worst heat. In the evenings we found relief sitting by the water's edge. Just as twilight is setting in all the life of the desert seems to come here for the evening drink. Jackals would play fearlessly like dogs twenty feet from us if we were quiet, not seeming to mind the presence of human beings; or we would see duradji, single file, stepping carefully along the bank with outstretched necks. As soon as darkness sets in the jackals begin their concert. They were our greatest pests, as they came insolently into the tents at night and carried off everything they could eat, from chickens to boots and shoes.

As it grew darker an occasional guffa rising out of the gloom would whirl silently past. Sometimes one would half stop and a voice in the darkness would be heard asking whose camp this was, and if we knew anything of their relatives or friends, from whom they had become separated. Sometimes we could give them no information, but occasionally we had bad tidings of those whom

we knew had fallen. One night we were hailed by a guffa that proved to be full of Chaldean acquaintances of ours. They told us that they were changing their camp for the third time, as the cholera kept following them, and in the last place they had left a child not yet quite dead but for whom they knew there was no hope. It cannot be said that these evening visitors added to the cheerfulness of our life.

And so the days passed slowly and painfully. One night we were aroused by cries that brought the whole camp to its feet. We could hear the sound of running and an occasional cry of "Here he is!" "Catch him!" etc. It proved to be an attempt on the part of Arabs to take off our thoroughbred Arab horses.

Horse-stealing is generally done in the following manner: A dark night is chosen by a party consisting of several individuals, stark naked and oiled with cocoanut or some other vegetable oil in order to make themselves slippery and hard to catch. They divide in two parties, one approaching the camp farthest from the place where the horses are tethered and there begin to howl as jackals; the others lie in wait as near to the horses as possible. If it is found that the watchmen are at their post the first party betrays itself, and when the alarm is given and all rush to that point, their accomplices creep up to the horses and in the confusion often succeed in getting them off. This time the attempt proved abortive, as our watchmen were experienced and not to be easily caught.

As this was repeated another night I had the unfortunate idea of arming our watchmen with rifles, which a few nights later I had cause to regret. The alarm was again raised, but the shouting and running soon changed to firing on both sides. On account of the intense heat we were sleeping just outside of the tent and found ourselves at one time between the belligerent parties in the

direct line of fire with the balls whistling over our heads. After perhaps a quarter of an hour, which seemed to us in our helpless position to be hours, the firing slackened and finally ceased. On calling the roll we found to our surprise that in spite of so much noise no one was hurt, and though we had kept off the attack not so much as a prisoner had been taken. The next morning I decided to take away the rifles and send for our dogs. Left in Bagdad were my two pointers, about which as sporting dogs the less said the better, but as watch dogs they were matchless. A few nights after the dogs arrived they gave the alarm and the usual shouting and confusion ensued. This time, thanks to the two dogs, a prisoner was taken. He was brought in triumph to the camp to be judged by the watchmen and punished according to the desert laws. I, however, stipulated that they should neither beat nor torture him, to which they very reluctantly consented.

The camp quieted down and for a long time we could hear the quiet and apparently friendly conversation between our watchmen and their prisoner. They all seemed to take the night's work as a matter of course. Kismet, that this time had spelled failure for the horse thieves, might under other circumstances be their own lot, and they were not therefore inclined to look upon the prisoner other than as one whose luck had forsaken him; the latter on his part accepted his fate as kismet and asked for no mercy.

The next morning I saw our prisoner. He was quite naked, squatting on his knees with his wrists tied to his ankles. He was a young man with long braided locks falling on his shoulders, and his face wore a calm expression as if he were perfectly reconciled to his fate. As I approached he bowed his head, avoiding my eye, and I passed by in silence. Being sure that no real harm would

come to him, I considered it wisest to leave him to his tribesmen, supposing that they would soon set him free. What then was my surprise on leaving the tent a little before sunset to find the poor fellow quietly sitting there in the same forced position. It seems he had been kept all day thus with his bare head exposed to the sun, an ordeal that would have given anybody but an Arab a sunstroke. I ordered him to be set free at once, the Arabs protesting and saying that he might consider himself lucky if they let him off by night-time. However, they untied him and during the process lectured him as to the uselessness of attempting another attack on us and advised him to warn his fellows that a like reception awaited them if they came. The prisoner continued to keep silent and when they freed him rose stiffly and staggered off, and for a long time I watched his diminishing silhouette lighted by the slanting rays of the setting sun. Whether it was that the hours spent in our camp were so vividly described as to kill any desire on his own part or that of his companions to risk another raid, the fact remains that we were no more molested during our sojourn in the desert.

In September it became evident that the worst of the epidemic was over; the number of cases reported each day steadily diminished, while the number of recoveries increased, and so, taking heart, the inhabitants of Bagdad began to think of returning to town.

That we and all those with us safely survived the epidemic was possibly owing to the strict control I kept of the diet and drinking of the whole camp. But on our return to the city we found that many of our acquaintances had fallen victims, and for weeks after we reached home we kept discovering blanks in the list.

One of the saddest cases was that of a family we knew well: the father, both children and several servants were

THE INTERIOR OF MOSQUE OF SHEIKH ABDUL KADIR

carried off within a few hours, and the wife and mother returned alone to England, her native land, leaving all she held dear buried in unknown graves.

But though weakening in Bagdad, the epidemic continued with devastating march up the Tigris to Mosul and northeast by the pilgrim routes into Persia and the Caucasus. It was just the period for the pilgrims' return from their sacred places in Turkish Arabia, Nedjef and Kerbella, and in the great caravans the cholera made enormous havoc. These caravans thus formed, so to speak, artificial means of spreading the disease as fast as they could travel throughout countries through which they passed.

In conclusion, it will perhaps be interesting to mentio the plague of the eighteenth century in Constantinople, when it was a yearly guest in that capital, continuing from seven to eight months annually and dying out only as a cold season set in. We find very interesting material on this subject in a work by D'Ohsson, who was Swedish chargé d'affaires in the last of the eighteenth century. This book, which in every respect is a valuable one, is unfortunately at the present time out of print and very difficult to obtain.

This is what the author, who was an eyewitness, says of these epidemics:

"It is difficult to ascertain the origin of the plague or to find a remedy for this terrible disease. During the past centuries learned men have left us many treatises on this subject, but all their experiments and researches have only led to theories and contradictory conclusions. These epidemics, which in former times devastated all Europe, have, in our day, apparently, become localised in the East. Constantinople and Cairo are now their favourite haunts, and the inhabitants of these cities suffer the most severe epidemics. In the plan of this book does not enter

an examination of the influence that the diet and filth of this city have upon the spreading of the scourge; nor the effect of the damp atmosphere of Egypt, which is aggravated by the miasma emanating from the decaying vegetation in the stagnant marshes that are formed by the yearly overflow of the Nile. All our historical knowledge bears witness to the fact that the Greeks knew of the origin of this disease no more than we. They called it the sacred disease, owing to the powerlessness of human help or knowledge, and they appealed to their gods, offering them sacrifices.

"The Mohammedans, also crushed by their impotence against the scourge and also knowing no more of its origin or treatment, depended upon supernatural help, bringing sacrifices, giving alms and offering public prayers. Convinced that these epidemics were Heaven-sent on account of their sins, they considered all precautionary measures, such as were suggested by the example and teaching of their European neighbours, to be sinful.

"The results of the study of this scourge during so many centuries is confined to only learning its symptoms and fatal results. Vomiting, headache, inflamed eyes, hemorrhage, fainting, hoarseness, severe fever, buboes, carbuncles, these are the characteristic symptoms of this disease. There are, however, many cases that, owing to individual idiosyncrasies or the degree of acuteness of the seizure, present so many contradictory symptoms as to puzzle and even lead astray the most experienced physicians.

"Garlic, vinegar, opium, laudanum, perfumery, and, according to some authorities, wine and liquors, are the prophylactic remedies to be employed. Gruel, tonics, treatment for softening the chest, these are the commonly resorted to medical treatment. Bouillons are harmful and blood-letting almost always fatal. The strength of

the illness is such and the poison thereof so severe that persons seized are generally carried off on the third to fourth day, and of one hundred cases seldom as many as eight or ten survive.

"Buboes, the most characteristic symptom of the plague, generally appear as swelling in the arm-pits, in the groins or in the neck. Sometimes they are found on the face or even in the eyes. Some unhappy ones have as many as three, four or five, or even seven at a time. Those who, thanks to a strong constitution, recover, have the appearance of horrid skeletons and must follow a rigorous régime to avoid a relapse of the illness, which is always fatal. The fortunate ones who pull through are not, however, guaranteed against a second attack, and there have been known those who have had the plague several times and have at last succumbed to it. Such is generally the fate of the leeches, Mohammedans and Jews, who devote themselves to the plague-stricken.

"It is worthy of note that all those who have had the disease are warned of a new outbreak or epidemic in the towns where they live by pain in the scars of the carbuncles and buboes. Children and young people are more susceptible to the plague than those of maturer age, and as observation has proved, especially in the capital, foreigners, travellers and all recent arrivals are more likely to be victims than are the natives. Another not less interesting observation shows what might be termed the caprices of infection. Having been exposed a hundred times with impunity, one may contract the disease when apparently least exposed. Hundreds of people who visit plague-infected houses, kiss their friends who are in death agony, inherit their property, wear their clothes, even furs, without any harm; while in other cases or in later years a chance letter from distant parts may bring the plague miasma that proves fatal.

"In Cairo, and particularly in Constantinople, this awful disease reigns all summer, beginning generally towards the latter part of April and ending only in November. The temperature serves as a thermometer, showing the rise and fall of the epidemic, which, gaining, reaches its highest culminating point during the greatest heat, and declines as cold weather approaches, especially if the winter is not an extreme one in its cold nor too soft, in either of which cases, as close observation has proved, the epidemic again takes on new force.

"The secondary towns, as Adrianople, Brusa, Smyrna, Salonica, Alexandria, Aleppo, Damascus, Bagdad, Busreh and others, are visited by the plague at greater intervals, but on the other hand the epidemics are of greater intensity in these cities and in the adjoining villages and hamlets. The reasons for periodical outbursts of the plague are unknown.

"It is impossible to picture or describe a town invaded by this contagion. There are years when in six months over sixty thousand are carried off in Constantinople alone. Whole families are wiped out in from ten to fifteen days. Devastation goes from house to house; the weeping and mourning of one household, the constant fear of others, the funeral processions filling the streets, pale bluish faces met with at every step, the dying whom one cannot always avoid, in narrow, dark and crowded streets, stagnation in commerce and all business, the imperative heritage processes that are daily made more complicated by ever-occurring additional deaths,—all these poison the existence of even those who cling the closest to the dogma of fatality.

"The more intelligent of the inhabitants feel the need of prophylactic measures, but they are powerless to fight against the superstition of the majority and they have not the courage to carry out such precautions. If some avoid

contact with the actual patients they yet freely see the other members of the household, those who care for the patient, and even sleep in the same room with him. Those who flee from an infected house to that of a friend or relative take with them their clothing and bedding in a blind, fatal carelessness. If one dies or recovers of the plague there is no thought of destroying the bedding or linen nor of cleaning the house. The greatest danger is that when a person is seized with the disease, the belief in fatalism keeps the relatives close by the bedside of the sufferer, by their example teaching him to bow to the rod."

This is a picture that, alas, has changed little during the epidemics of our day, and unfortunately not in Turkey alone.

CHAPTER V

SUNNITES AND SHIITES, AND THE RELICS OF THE PROPHET

Division of Moslem World into Two Factions—The Koran the Foundation of Islamism—Views Regarding Paradise and Hell—Chief Factors towards Obtaining Paradise: Prayers, Fasts, Pilgrimages to Holy Places, Alms, Sacred Wars—Teachings Regarding Pure and Impure—Ablutions—Daily and Special Prayers—Fasts—What are Sunnites and Shiites?—Original Cause of the Division—Twelve Shiite Imams—Imam Mehdi—Mudjtaheids—Their Importance among the Shiites—Shiite Hatred of Abu-Bekr, Omar and Osman—Result of Split in the Mohammedan Religion—Religious Wars—Letter of Selim I. to Shah Ismael—The Passing of the Moslem Holy Places from Shiites to Sunnites—The Persian Sacred Banner—The Sacred Banner of the Kor—The Origin of the Prophet's Sacred Banner—Its Passing into the Possession of the Turkish Sultan—The Significance of Sacred Banners—Sacred Garments and Their Origin—Ceremony of 15 Ramadan—Two Holy Teeth—Holy Beard—Mysterious Appearance in Various Parts of the Mohammedan World of Hair—Significance of These Relics—Inferior Relics.

THE one hundred and sixty million followers of the Mohammedan religion are divided into two principal sects, those of the Sunnites and Shiites, of which the former are the dominant element in Turkey, Egypt, and Africa, and the latter, in Persia, the Caucasus, Bokhara and India.

While based on the same fundamental doctrines, these two factions differ in details that have given rise to unreconcilable disagreements causing enmity, not only religious, but even political.

The basis of the Mohammedan religion—"Islam"—

is the Koran, which is composed of moral, religious and political laws, given in blank verse and often expressed in mystic form. Here one finds a mixture of Christian and Hebraic influence. The Biblical patriarchs and prophets are accepted, among them being Christ. "We believe," says Mohammed in one of the chapters of the Koran, "in God, and in him whom He sent to us, in him whom He revealed to Abraham, Ishmael and Jacob and the twelve tribes. We believe in the holy books that Moses, Jesus and the prophets received from Heaven. We make no distinction between them. We are the mouthpiece of God."

The Koran is remarkable for its disconnected, fragmentary form and absence of any system in its composition. It is full of obscure passages giving rise to much discussion among modern commentators. Of himself Mohammed speaks only as of an intermediate between God and man, which explains the fact that when Moslems quote the Koran, they do not say merely "Mohammed says," but "God says." The Koran accepts the one God without the Trinity. Angels as God's messengers are: Gabriel, the inspirer of Mohammed, and the inscriber of the divine commands; Michael, the warrior who guides the wars for the faith; Azrael, the angel of death; and Israfil, who will sound the trumpet to call forth the dead at the day of judgment. Aside from the above mentioned, the Moslems believe that two guardian angels are given to each person—one to watch over his right hand and to inscribe his good deeds, and the one on the left who notes the evil. Angels are mortal. They must have some time died, in order to rise on the day of the last judgment. This day will be foreshadowed by many signs and wonders in heaven and on earth. The last warning will be three blasts of the trumpet by the angel Israfil. After the third call the entire space between

heaven and earth will be filled with the souls of the dead, that, being united with their bodies, will appear at the judgment in a state of nakedness. The angel Gabriel holds the scales and weighs the deeds, placing the good on one side and the evil on the other. If one has injured his neighbour, a corresponding amount of his good deeds will be taken from him and placed to the credit of the one injured. If he has no good deeds to give, then a part of the evil deeds of the one he injured will be placed on his scales. After this judgment comes the trial of the bridge. All will follow Mohammed over the bridge "El-Serab" that crosses the abyss of hell and is as narrow as the edge of a sword. The faithful are led by a light cross safely into Paradise, the unbelievers fall into Gehenna or Hell. Between Paradise and Hell is a neutral space, "El-Araf," a country deprived of rest and joy, and is reserved for children and idiots, or such as have done neither good nor evil, or such as whose evil and good are of equal weight.

Hell is not represented as a place of everlasting torment. By the grace of God it is possible to leave it through the intercessory prayers of the holy or by the fulfilment of certain religious rites by them in the name of the dead; as pilgrimages to Mecca.

Paradise is represented as a place gratifying every sensual instinct of man. In describing this Paradise, Mohammed, who was brought up in the arid desert, dwells much upon descriptions of flowing water, and of green gardens inhabited by women who never grow old.

When the true believer has passed through the various trials and judgment and become purified of his sins, he refreshes himself at the pond of the Prophet or the lake of sweet-smelling water into which flows the river of Paradise, the "El-Kansir." When the believer has drunk of this water the angel Rizvan will open to him

the doors of "El-Djenet," or the garden of Paradise, the ground of which is formed of wheaten flour perfumed and scattered with pearls and hyacinths. Rivers of pure water, wine, milk and honey flow between banks covered with flowers and musk. In Paradise is also to be found the tree "tuba," the branches of which are loaded with fruits that bend themselves to the hand of those wishing to gather them. The garments of the faithful sparkle with precious stones.

Each possesses hundreds of servants who offer food and drink of which one can partake without ever being satiated. Every true believer here finds, aside from his earthly wives, seventy "hour-el-ayoun"—houris.

The interpretation of the Koran has given rise to an enormous amount of literature, and its commentators are the subject of not only theological but legal learning. The Koran itself is written in Arabic, as are all prayers, commentaries and judicial interpretations of the same. The Koran is divided into chapters—"suras"—and the chapters into verses. According to the teaching of the Koran the principal factors towards gaining admission to Paradise are prayers, fasts, almsgiving, pilgrimages to sacred places and sacred wars—djakads.

Prayer can be offered only when in a state of purity in the sense of physical cleanliness. Prayers otherwise offered are not only unanswered, but are considered as sinful. From this rises the necessity of ablutions which are either general, "el-vezu," or partial, "el-husel." In the absence of water, sand is permitted as a medium for cleanliness, "el-taeamul."

The teachings concerning water suitable for these ablutions occupy many pages of theological writings, as well as the method of washing, from the shoulder to the wrist or the reverse, and of the quantity of water to be used.

From this basis rises the dogma of all existing matter being divided into pure and impure, which occupies a special place in theological teaching and in which are detailed all pure and impure objects, as well as certain physiological functions and conditions after the performance of which one is rendered impure. Among the indisputably impure are human excrements, certain animals, as dogs, swine, scaleless fish, bodies of the dead, carcasses of all animals dying a natural death, unbelievers —that is, those of other than the Moslem faith (Christians, Jews), idolaters—intoxicating drinks and all that is fermented.

Touching any of these objects, or certain physiological conditions also render a person impure. Clothing touching an impure object, especially if the object be wet, becomes defiled. In this case the garments must be washed several times. This explains the reason of Mohammedans so carefully avoiding contact with Christians on a rainy day. Our Christian servants always dreaded going to the bazaars in bad weather, where they were avoided as lepers. In many parts of the East one may notice the lips of a Mohammedan moving when shaking hands with a European. He is repeating the prayer for purification after touching your hand! This also explains the fact that in former times all Christian or other than Mohammedan subjects were obliged by their Moslem ruler to wear clothes distinguishing them, so that the true believer might avoid defilement. In Persia this custom existed in the past century, and in Bokhara is now enforced in regard to Jews.

And so having performed his ablutions, the Mohammedan begins his prayer. Prayers are divided into those for every day, feast days, and prayers for special seasons, for danger, earthquakes, etc.

Daily prayers must be performed five times a day at

stated hours, and are therefore divided into morning or "Selat-ess-subh," which is performed just before the dawn; "Selat-ess-zuhr," noon-time prayer; "Selat-el-asr," the prayer two hours before sunset; "Selat-el-Magrif," after sundown; "Selat-el-asha," between sunset and midnight.

As the hour for prayer approaches Mohammedan towns ring with the sound of the "muezzin" called from the minarets in Sunnite countries and from the roofs of mosques in Shiite lands. As the time for prayer approaches every one goes to prepare for it; often in the middle of a conversation, as the cry of the muezzin is heard, a Mohammedan will break a half-finished sentence, saying apologetically, "It is the time of Namaz," and hasten off to perform his ablutions, returning to say his prayer where he happened to be when the call came. Wherever the hour of prayer finds him, the Mohammedan prays—in the shop, in the fields; without hesitation he prays even in the street. During prayers the face must be turned towards Mecca, called "Kebleh" or the "centre." Most Mohammedans carry a little compass to be exact in finding the point. During the prayer there are prescribed numbers of genuflections and prostrations when the forehead must touch the ground. For this the Shiites use a "mohr" or "torba," a small clay tablet about the size of a silver dollar, made of earth taken from the tomb of some Imam. This tablet is placed on the ground in front of the prayer, who during prostrations touches it with his forehead. On the foreheads of some Moslems, from frequent and vigorous prostrations, a dark blue mark is formed, the unmistakable sign of a religious fanatic.

Most Mohammedans have prayer rugs that they carry with them when on a journey. During prayers it is unlawful to wear anything made of leather or of pure silk.

An exception to this rule is made for women. Also gold may not be worn and gold rings or watches must be removed. For this reason true Moslems generally prefer silver rings and watches, and one usually sees in Persia the most precious stones in silver settings.

As to fasts, Mohammedans observe the entire month of Ramadan, during which time they neither eat nor drink from sunrise to sunset.

Pilgrimages to Mecca are obligatory on all Mohammedans, and aside from this, Shiites visit the tombs of imams buried in Persia and Turkey. Almsgiving is also obligatory on all believers. This is commanded in the Koran in the form of benevolent donations and individual help. Secret benevolence is preferred to that done in public. Aside from this, in the 12th verse of the 8th Sura, Mohammed ordains that one-fifth of all property is to go to the Prophet and to the poor. In the early days of Islamism this one-fifth offering, "Humz," went into a common treasury, "beyt-ul-mae," that was controlled by the people. There is also a certain sum paid by every Mohammedan for benevolent objects. A certain day, too, is set aside upon which almsgiving is ordained.

Finally, the last condition for obtaining Paradise is "sacred war," which, during the first years of the propagation of Islamism, played an important rôle in the spread of the faith of Mohammed. Formerly, at least twice a year, sacred warfare was considered obligatory, but in course of time naturally they became less frequent. Holy war, or "djahad," can be proclaimed only by the caliph, as the sultan, and by raising the sacred banner of the Prophet. In the past century, however, djahad was proclaimed several times without the sacred banner. In Persia during the first half of the last century the sacred war was carried on in a most original way. Each year

a fanatical mob attacked the Christian houses, breaking the wine jars, and in passing did not neglect the opportunity of robbing and pillaging the houses.

The above-mentioned religious requirements are common to the Sunnites and Shiites.

The split in the Mohammedan world took place in the first century of the hegira. The distinction between the two sects is set forth in the definition of their names. Sunnite signifies habits—rules of life. The Sunnites call themselves thus as they accept the traditions handed down by disciples of Mohammed, as to the sayings and teachings of the Prophet in regard to various points of ceremonials and religious laws which are not directly touched upon in the Koran. The Shiahs or Shiites, on the other hand, do not accept any traditions except those given by the imams, i.e., Mohammed's son-in-law, Ali, and his eleven successors; and therefore they call them "sieh," or protestors, in favour of the truth.

The immediate cause of the disagreement was, however, political. Mohammed died, not having appointed a successor, though, as the Shiites affirm, he more than once mentioned his cousin and son-in-law Ali as his chosen successor. Ali was, however, younger than his rival candidates and did not possess such influence as they did. While he was busy arranging for the burial of Mohammed, Abu-Bekr was chosen as caliph. Ali himself accepted this nomination as he did those of the following caliphs, Omar and Osman; following them Ali was chosen caliph, but fell soon after at the hands of an assassin.

The followers of Ali, however, look upon Abu-Bekr, Omar and Osman as usurpers, and consider Ali to be the only rightful successor, bringing as arguments his near relationship to the Prophet and the fact of Mohammed's having repeatedly in the hearing of the people named Ali

as his successor. This is the origin of the Shiite veneration of Ali and his eleven successors.

To this, too, can be traced the change in the formula of their faith by the addition of the name of Ali to the Shiite's creed. The Sunnite profession of faith, "There is but one God, and his prophet Mohammed," becomes in the Shiite mouth, "There is but one God, and Mohammed his prophet, and Ali his viceroy." This is the chief distinction between the two beliefs.

In addition to this follows the Shiite veneration of the twelve imams, whose fate was for the most part tragical, as the greater number of them met with violent deaths; Ali himself, becoming caliph in 660 A.D., was killed five years later when praying in a mosque. He is buried in Nedjef in the mosque called Meshedi Ali. His son and heir, the second Caliph Hassan, was, at the instigation of the rival political faction, poisoned by his own wife; he is buried in Medina. His brother Hussein, counted as the third caliph, fell in 681 in an unequal fight at Kerbela, together with all of his sons except one, Imam Ali, known as Zein-el-Abdeen, who was also subsequently poisoned. His tomb is in Medina. The same fate was that of the imams following him: Mohammed-el-Bager and Imam Jaffar, or Djaffar, buried in Medina. Imam Musa-el-Kazema is buried in Kazmain near Bagdad. The eighth imam, Ali-el-Riza, died a natural death and is buried in the Persian city of Meshed. Imam Mohammed-el-Djerad is buried in Kazmain. The tenth, Ali-el-Hadi, is buried in Samara, near Bagdad; the eleventh, Hassan-al-Askeri, is buried in Kazmain; and the last, Mehdi, is buried also in Samara.

In the person of the Mehdi, the last direct descendant of Ali, the line ended. But the Shiites could not be reconciled to this fact. They sincerely believe that Imam Mehdi is still alive, and with his life is connected the very

PONTOON BRIDGE ACROSS TIGRIS AT BAGDAD

existence of the world, before the end of which he will again make his appearance, to convert all unbelievers to the Shiite faith. His appearance will immediately precede that of Jesus Christ and His struggle with the Anti-Christ, "Dedjalem." For this reason Imam Mehdi is called "Kaim" or "Imam akherie zeman," i.e., the Latter-day Imam. From this belief rises the Shiite dogma of Imamism, or the spiritual succession of the imams in the persons of Mudjtaheids.

The Imam Mehdi, continuing his invisible existence, makes known his will through the medium of certain Mudjtaheids whose holy life and learning have made them worthy of being the intermediary between the imam and the people, giving to them the commands of the imam. In this way each Mudjtaheid may be regarded as an independent interpreter of the Koran. Each one writes for his followers or "Mukabeids" rules to guide their belief. The popularity of a Mudjtaheid is estimated by the number of his followers, and in the history of Persia individual Mudjtaheids having over a million followers are not rare. This, of course, leads to disagreements, and to new sects that are so frequently formed among Shiites. For instance, in the first half of the past century the Mudjtaheid of Kazveen Mullah Mohammed Ali publicly denied the existence of the impure in nature. All the clergy rose against this doctrine, but they were unable to do anything as he was a Mudjtaheid. Later Mullah Mohammed joined the sect of Babis.

Mudjtaheids have always occupied a very important place in the history of Shiite Persia. Being the direct interpreters of the Koran and God's will, they held and are holding all the justice of the land in their hands, as all Moslem law is based on the Koran. Hence the legal and religious life of the people is entirely governed by the clergy. As the interpreters of the Koran, the Mudj-

taheids are considered infallible, and their decision is not questioned.

In Persia formerly all legal power was in the hands of the Mudjtaheids, the civil authorities acting only to fulfil their decision. In criminal cases the sentence was carried out immediately, and frequently by the Mudjtaheids themselves.

In the eighteenth century the Ispahan Mudjtaheid, Aga Seyid Bager, frequently fulfilled personally the office of executioner, and often the condemned, knowing that a repeal was impossible, begged for the privilege of dying by the holy hands of the Mudjtaheid rather than by those of the ordinary headsman. When the Kadjar dynasty came to the throne of Persia, these rulers gradually took to themselves jurisdictory power in many indisputable cases of civil law and crimes against public order. At the present time the clergy are the judges exclusively in cases pertaining to family life—marriage, divorce, and crimes against the faith; in all disputed judicial cases capable of being settled on oaths; and finally such crimes as are punishable by death, excepting those that are directed against public security, the punishment of which is meted out by the civil authorities.

As a part of their veneration of the twelve imams, the Shiites naturally introduced their hatred of the usurpers, Abu-Bekr, Omar and Osman; against Omar, because he was the first to dispute the rights of Ali. The abhorrence in which he is held is shown by the fact that when his name is mentioned a Shiite will always add, "May his name be cursed." The day of his death is fêted throughout all Persia, his effigy subjected to all sorts of indignity and finally burned, and his murderer, Abu Luhi, has a monument erected to his memory in Kashan.

It can be easily understood, therefore, how the hatred between these two sects continues, and that this division has been a misfortune to the Moslem East, causing a series

of bloody wars; persecutions of Shiites in Turkey and of Sunnites in Persia; and sowing such enmity between the two people as continues to the present time. This feeling is fanned by the fact of most of the Shiite holy places being in Turkey, which thus possesses the keys to three great religions—Christian, Hebrew and Mohammedan.

During the wars between Persia and Turkey the Sunnite ulemas issued special orders or "fetwas" in which was promulgated the idea that the killing of one Shiite was more meritorious than the death of seventy Christians or any other enemies of Islam. On the other hand the Shiites put their Sunnite prisoners to a lingering death of torment. For this reason all peaceful contracts signed by the sultan and shah begin with a clause annulling the anathema against the first three caliphs and an agreement for freedom of religion for all Sunnites living in Persia.

The Shiites have been the ruling power in Persia only since the reign of Shah Ismael Ardabeli, in the sixteenth century, who anathematised Ayesha, the favourite wife of the Prophet, as well as the first three caliphs. He tore down all Sunnite tombs and places of worship and cruelly persecuted such of his subjects as belonged to the Sunnite sect.

Such an attitude toward Sunnites could not fail to excite the indignation of Sultan Selim I,[1] who in 1514 declared war against Shah Ismael. This declaration was in a letter sent by special messenger and is one of the most curious historical documents existing, showing as it does the Sunnite estimation of Shiites as heretics and renegades. This document is also interesting as a specimen of the flowery style of the time, and the primitive relations existing between the potentates of the East. The following is a translation of parts of this remarkable epistle.

[1] Reigning from 1512 to 1520.

"The Supreme Being, who is the sovereign arbiter of the destiny of man, says in his writings[1] that the truth is only to be found in the Moslem religion, and all those who seek salvation by any other means will be condemned at the day of the last judgment. This God of truth also declares that his decree is unchangeable and that all the actions of men must be guided by him, and that all deviation from his path will be punished by fire and everlasting torment. Count us, Lord, among the true believers who walk in the paths of salvation and who turn carefully from the temptation of the infidels and the damned. May the blessings of the pure and holy be upon Mohammed Ul Mustapha,[2] Prince of two worlds, the Chief among prophets, and upon all his disciples and descendants.

"The Ottoman monarch, the master of the heroes of the age, equal with Feridun[3] in force and might; of Alexander the Great in majesty and glory, and of King Khvasrew in justice and mercy; the exterminator of the unbelievers and idolaters, the destroyer of the enemies of the orthodox faith; the terror of tyrants and the Pharaoh of the age, who breaks the sceptres and crowns of the greatest Potentates of the world—the glorious Sultan Selim Khan, son of Sultan Bayazid Khan, son of Sultan Mohammed Khan, son of Sultan Murod Khan, graciously addresses a word to thee, Emir Ismael, ruler of Persia, the Sipchralar, or Commander in chief of the royal forces, the Zohak[4] of the Orient, the Efrassiab[5] of the century, the Dara[6] of our days. To thee we write to

[1] The Koran.

[2] The title of the prophets.

[3] The sixth king of the Persian dynasty of Pishadies.

[4] The fifth king of the Pishdadian dynasty, a usurper and noted for his cruelty.

[5] The ninth king of the same dynasty, as unfortunate as he was cruel.

[6] The last king of the same dynasty, Darius Codomannus, overthrown by Alexander the Great.

make known to thee that the works of the hand of the Most High are not the frail productions of caprice or derision but contain an infinity of mysteries which are not to be penetrated by human understanding. God himself says in his holy book,[1] 'We have created heaven and earth for a play.'"

Then follows a long résumé of the perfection of man —God's image and likeness upon earth—who is capable of receiving Godlike knowledge from the holy book, that is the Koran. Further on he shows that it is only by closely following these teachings and keeping them pure that everlasting happiness can be had in a future life. After this Selim addresses Ismael Shah personally in the following terms:

"But Emir Ismael, such bliss shall never be thine; for thou hast turned thy face from the divine laws; because thou hast left the path of salvation and the holy commandments; because thou hast broken the purity of the Moslem dogmas; dishonoured, destroyed, the true cult of God, and usurped the domains of the Orient unjustly and tyrannically. For thou, rising from the dust, hast elevated thyself in an odious manner to a position of greatness and magnificence; because thou hast opened to the Moslem the door of tyranny and oppression; because thou in thy unbelief hast joined iniquity, infidelity, and the blasphemy of an impious sect; because, protected by the mouth of lies and hypocrisy, thou hast sowed on every side trouble and sedition; because thou hast raised the standard of godlessness and heresy; because finally thou givest rein to thy caprices and passions, thy infamous lawlessness; thou hast the sin of having unloosed the sacred ties of the Mohammedan laws, in permitting the profanation of virgins; the massacre of many virtuous and respectable persons; the destruction of temples and

[1] Verse of the Koran.

of sacred edifices; the demolition of the tombs of many faithful and pure souls; despising ulemas, the doctors and emirs, the issue of the Prophet's blood; and hast anathematised the legitimate and venerable caliphs Omar and Osman."

Further on he says that, as it is the duty of every Mohammedan to stand up in defence of his profaned religion, he, Selim, has resolved,

"To exchange our Imperial ornaments for cuirass and coat of mail, to unfurl our ever-victorious banner, to call forth our invincible army, to draw our glorious arms from the furnace of our anger and our indignation, and march our troops, whose swords spare none, whose lances deal mortal blows, and whose arrows pierce the enemy even to the constellation of Sagittarius.

"In consequence of this noble and firm resolution we have started on our campaign. We have crossed the straits of Constantinople and are proceeding under the shadow of the protection of the Most High. We hope with his help soon to break the arms of evil and tyranny; remove from thy head the smoke of greatness and heroism which cause thee such dizziness; release the feeble and oppressed from the weight of the cruel yoke of thy dominion; and finally to suffocate thee in that turbulent flame and smoke that are vomited forth from thy seditious and demoralised deeds, and in this way verify upon thine own self the proverb, 'He who sows thorns can only harvest affliction and bitterness.' However, to conform ourselves to the spirit of the law of our holy Prophet, we would, before resorting to arms, present to thee, instead of the sword, the sacred Koran, and to exhort thee to embrace the orthodox faith: this is why we write thee this Imperial letter.

"Every man has his own individual nature, and the

human race is as mines of gold and of silver. There are people in whom the perverse character is as second nature and renders them incorrigible. Such are negroes, who in vain try to whiten their skin. There are others who correct themselves and rise above their errors, as in them the evil is not deeply rooted, and by attentive self-restraint they mortify their senses, and suppress the vicious inclinations of their natures."

He then calls upon Shah Ismael to repent and renounce his religious errors, as well as the land that formerly belonged to the Ottoman Empire. In conclusion he says:

"This resolution thou must at once take in view of thine own self-preservation and felicity. But if, to thy sorrow, thou continuest in thine errors, and carried away by the idea of thy greatness, thy power and thy foolish daring, if thou art obstinate in thy blind, iniquitous, and perverse conduct, thou wilt soon see these vast plains that are now in thy tyrannical and usurping hands, all adorned with our tents and our brilliant ensigns, and all covered with our victorious armies. And then will be fulfilled what is decreed in the secret councils of the Most High, who is the God of armies and the sovereign judge of all human actions. Peace be to him who follows in the path of peace."

This letter is to be found in the chronicles of Sayed-ed-deen Effendi, the official historian of the seventeenth century.

The wars that followed led to the Turkish occupation of the then very considerable provinces of Diarbekir and Kurdistan. Later the victorious expeditions against the Egyptian Mamelukes brought under Selim's sway Egypt, Syria, the Hedjaz, Mecca and Medina—the Mohammedan Palestine—together with the silver key of the Kaaba given to the conqueror by the sheikh of Mecca. This

key is in the coverings that envelop the sacred banner of the Prophet, that also passed into Selim's hands together with other relics that are now in Constantinople.

These relics are the following:

The sacred banner of the Prophet, or Ukab-es-Sherif, which was considered the most holy oriflamme of the Prophet, as he possessed several, black and white. I will notice in passing that in the pagan pre-Mohammedan times, the tribe of Kureish, who guarded the Kaaba, also possessed a banner called the "Eukab," from the name of a legendary bird whose flight was swifter than that of all other birds. But this banner is even more ancient. It is traced to the period of the ancient Parsis, to the time of the mythical King Zohak, fifth of the Pejdad dynasty, of whom I had occasion to speak above. Zohak was, according to tradition, a tyrant of unrivalled cruelty, as each day two human beings were put to death by his orders and their brains used as a salve for sores that he had on his shoulders. This continued until a blacksmith of Ispahan named Kiab, whose two sons were killed by the shah, raised a rebellion. In his grief he nailed his mantle to a stick and raising it addressed a fiery speech to the people. Zohak fled to Mount Damavand and the people offered the throne to Kiab. The latter refused the honour and proposed Feridun, Jamshid's grandson. This took place at the period of the autumnal equinox, and from that time the people commemorate the day as a "bairam" or "Mehredjan." Becoming shah, Feridun, in gratitude to Kiab, raised him to one of the most important positions in the kingdom, decorating his mantle with precious stones and making it the royal banner, calling it "Derefshi Kiabenie," the standard of Kiab. From that time the Persian royal standard has borne that name. This standard was taken in 636 during the time of Omar in the battle of Rodesi that ended fatally for Jazdedjir III.

The same position occupied by the standard of Kiab among the Persians was in Mecca occupied by their standard called the "Eukab," which they venerated. Mohammed, therefore, had a clear understanding of the importance in the eyes of the people, of standards, and took one with him on all his expeditions. Of the origin of the sacred Turkish standard the Turkish historian Ahmed Effendi gives the following account:

"During his flight from Mecca to Medina, Mohammed, with two of his followers, performed many miracles. When his enemies overtook him, with one word he dispersed some, and others he turned into his followers. Among the latter was one named Sekhmi, who, from a bitter enemy, was by a miracle (as in case of the New Testament Saul) turned into a fervent follower of Mohammed. On the way, in a burst of religious fervour, Sekhmi unwound his turban and fixing it to his lance, presented it as a banner to Mohammed. This was Mohammed's first standard, and since then all Turkish standards have, in commemoration of the man, been called "Sekhmi," making it a common noun. The standard accompanied Mohammed in such battles as he took part in personally, and it was with him when he occupied Mecca."

"After the death of Mohammed," continues the same historian, "Abu-Bekr himself first gave the example of deep veneration of this sacred relic. The honour of carrying the banner was given to the commander in chief and it was entitled Eukab, or Sanjak-es-Sherif, the sacred standard. Then the standard passed successively to the caliphs of the Ommiads, in Damascus, then to the Abbasside of Bagdad, and finally to Cairo, and with the conquest of Egypt by Selim I. was by him brought to the Ottoman capital. This standard is covered by other banners belonging to the Caliph Omar, then in forty cov-

erings of taffeta, and all of these are enveloped in green cloth coverings. Perhaps this latter circumstance has given rise to the universal belief that the colour of the standard itself is green, whereas it is in fact of black wool. Within these coverings is also laid a small Koran, written, as it is supposed, by the hand of Omar; also the silver key of the Kaaba which was given in token of submission to the same Selim I. The flagstaff of this banner is mounted with a square knob in which is preserved another Koran, written by the hand of the Caliph Osman.

When the standard first came into the possession of the Turks it was kept in Damascus, the governor or pasha of which, in his capacity of Emir ul Haj,[1] took it with him when he accompanied the yearly sacred caravan to Mecca. But in 1595, during the reign of Murad III., the sacred standard was sent to Hungary as a stimulant and encouragement to the army and people, and its appearance among the Turkish forces did in fact have a tremendous moral effect. During the next expedition the grand vizier himself considered it the greatest privilege to carry it out of Constantinople. The entire court and population of the city accompanied this relic as far as the outskirts of the town. In the autumn it was again returned to Constantinople, and the following spring Mohammed III., leading the army in person, took with him the sacred banner, confiding it to the care of 300 emirs, at the head of which was the chief "Kakeb-el-Eshrif."

From this period, following precedents set by Mohammed III., the standard was taken only when the sultan himself or the grand vizier led the troops. A special and luxurious tent was carried along for the housing of the sacred relic. When the troops went into winter

[1] The title of the person to whom is confided the leadership of the "sacred caravan" sent to Mecca with the sultan's yearly gift at the fête of Kurban Bairam.

MOSQUE OF IMAM HUSSEIN

quarters the banner was removed from the staff and packed away as it generally was in times of peace, in a special box, during which ceremony prayers and incense were offered. As this most sacred banner accompanies the troops only under exceptional circumstances (during the last war in the nineteenth century it was not taken out), its presence acts magically upon both the army and populace, exciting them to fanaticism. The standard has not been used in any ceremonials since 1769. In this year, March 27th, its being taken out for a certain ceremonial had the result of causing a massacre of Christians in Constantinople, as the fanaticism of the public resented its being seen by the eyes of any but Moslems.

The second relic is the mantle of the Prophet, "Kherki Sherif." This is of black camelot, and was worn by Mohammed himself, who presented it in 630 H. to the famous Arab poet Kiab-ibu-Zakhir as a reward for a poem written by the latter in praise of God and his prophet. The Caliph Unavia I. bought this garment from the descendants of Kiab and it then passed from the Ommiads to the Abbassides, was preserved in Cairo and together with the holy standard passed to the Turks under Selim I. This holy garment is preserved in forty bags of rich material. It is opened once a year, the 15th of Ramadan, and the ceremony is a very solemn and gorgeous one, at which the sultan himself is present standing, and all his ministers and commanders.

The keeper of the imperial seal stands close to the sacred garments, and next to him one of the chief dignitaries of the court, who holds a pile of muslin towels. One after another in order of rank all those present go forward and kiss the sacred garments; the keeper of the seal immediately wipes the spot kissed with a towel, which he then presents to the one who has just had the privilege of kissing the holy relic.

After this ceremony is over, certain of the mufti and Hakeb-el-Eshrif wash in a large silver basin that part of the garment that has been subjected to the kissing. The water in which it was washed is poured into flacons and sent to different members of the court and persons of high standing. During the remaining fifteen days of the fast—Ramadan— a few drops of this precious water is added to the water with which they break the fast, for, as is known, the Mohammedan fast comprises absolute abstinence from all drink, as well as food, from sunrise to sunset. But of this full details will be given in another chapter.

This mantle is not the only one remaining after the Prophet's death. There is another which, according to tradition, was bequeathed by Mohammed before his death to one of his followers, Uveis-el-Apemie. The descendants of Uveis treasure this mantle of coarse woollen stuff, and it is passed down to the eldest in each generation. This family has lived for nearly 400 years in Constantinople. The owners of the mantle bear the title of Kirkai Sherif, or the Sheikh of the Holy Mantle. This garment is also exposed during the last fifteen days of Ramadan for the veneration of the faithful who bring their offerings. The edge of this mantle is also kissed and again holy water is given out. The multitude pressing to see this relic are the more numerous from the fact of the populace not being admitted to the relics kept in the Seraglio.

The third relic, "Seen-esh-Sherif," are two of the four teeth that the Prophet lost during the battle of Ukhurdi. One of these teeth is in the Seraglio, the other in the mausoleum where is the tomb of Mohammed II. These relics are shown to the people the holy night—Leilet-ul-Kadr—the 27th of Ramadan.

Finally, the fourth relic is the "Lekheri Sherif," or

holy beard, more correctly a portion of the beard belonging, as is affirmed, to the Prophet. Mohammedans do not like to speak of this relic, partly from a disinclination to profane it by talking of it with one who is not a Moslem, others from their inability to prove its authenticity. However it may be, I know of three cases where pilgrims returning from Mecca while in Constantinople were alleged to have in some mysterious way become possessed of one of the sacred hairs. One of these hairs was brought to Tabriz in Persia when I was there, another to Meshed, in both cases causing an enormous sensation among the people. These hairs were placed in rich caskets and the people thronged in crowds to see them. The third case was of interest in another way. In 1904 an inhabitant of Osh, in the province of Fergana, an ex-kadi (judge) bought in Constantinople of an old woman one hair of the beard of the Prophet. He intended going from Batoum to Fergana, through the steppes of western Siberia, to the province of Semiryetchensk, planning to make a good profit from the easily duped people; but as the casket that contained the hair was of very delicate and rare workmanship the customs officials detained it, demanding a payment of 80 rupees[1] duty. Unfortunately the further fate of this particular hair is not known to me. To the appearance of such evidently false relics the local authorities seem quite indifferent, perhaps from the fear of disturbances that might arise among the fanatic people if they were declared false.

The historian quoted above, Ahmed Effendi, tells how once when the Caliph Muhamed I. was presented with a sandal which was said to have belonged to the Prophet, he reverently kissed it and raised it to his eyes, ordered the bringer to be rewarded, and told those about him that, as he had no faith personally in the genuineness of

[1] $40.

the sandal, he bought it only to prevent its getting into the hands of those who would make an unprincipled use of it.

I must state that none of these relics are the objects of idolatry, nor are miracles attributed to them. They are only objects of deep veneration, capable, especially in the case of the holy standard, of raising a burst of wildest fanaticism throughout the Mohammedan world.

Aside from these relics there are many others that are with more or less justice considered to have belonged to the Prophet. Among them are the armour and vessels kept in the Seraglio at Constantinople, and the ancient adornments of the Kaaba. These last were brought to Constantinople in 1613 by a certain Hussan Bey whom the Sultan Ahmed I. had sent to make repairs about the Kaaba. He brought back with him also a golden plate with pearls, rubies and emeralds which had adorned the grave of the Prophet in Medina. In the place of this plate diamonds of great value were sent. Then there are minor relics, carpet, Sedjade, of the Caliph Abu-Bekr, the arms of the companions of the Prophet, and the turban of the Caliph Omar. In olden times all of these treasures were kept in the throne room, "takh odassi," and finally were placed in a special mausoleum known as the "Kherkai Sherif odassi," or the room of the sacred mantle.

In speaking of relics, notice should be made in conclusion of the sacred footmark—"Kademi Sherif." This stone, with a human footprint upon it, which is supposed to have been the impress of the Prophet's foot, the Sultan Mahmoud I. ordered to be placed in the mausoleum over the tomb of Eyoub at the head of the Golden Horn.

CHAPTER VI

PILGRIMAGES AND CARRYING OF BODIES TO THE HOLY PLACES OF THE SHIITES IN TURKEY

Pilgrimages Obligatory to Moslems—Places of Worship Common to both Sunnites and Shiites—Titles of Meshedi, Kerbeli and Hadji —The Mohammedan Calendar—Lunar and Solar Years—Names of Lunar Months and Their Derivations—Formula for Transposing Moslem and Christian Eras—Pilgrimages of Caucasians and Persians to Holy Places found in Turkey—Unexpected Discovery made by a Physician—Contraband Caravanserai—Suburb of Kerbela —Ancient Canals—City of Kerbela, Population and Professions— Torbas—Revenues—Treasures of Kerbela Nedjef—Mudjtaheids— Occupation of Inhabitants—Cities of Cufa and Samara—Hadji Mirza Hassan, Most Popular Persian Mudjtaheid—His Part in the Abolishment of the Tobacco Monopoly in Persia.

PILGRIMAGES occupy a prominent place in the life of Mohammedans in general, but particularly so among the Shiite sect. Most of the sacred cities of the Moslems are to be found in Turkey, and in this way the Turks hold the keys to the sacred cities of three great religions—the Christian, Jewish and Mohammedan.

The sacred cities of the Shiites in Turkish Arabia are the following: Kazmain, Kerbela, Nedjef and Samara. The one hundred and sixty million Mohammedans are divided into two great sects, the Sunnites and Shiites. The former are believers in the "Suni," or the traditional teachings of Mohammed, to which they attach equal importance with the Koran, and which are not accepted by the Shiites. On the other hand, the Shiites consider Ali,

the Prophet's son-in-law, to be his rightful successor, and the first caliphs recognised by the Sunnites, Abu-Bekr, Osman and Omar, to be usurpers.

The Shiites hold as sacred twelve imams. The first of the line was Ali, the son-in-law of Mohammed, who was caliph from 660 A.D., but after five years was murdered in the city Cufa when on his way to the mosque to pray. He is buried in Nedjef, in the mosque of Meshedi Ali. His son and successor, Hassan, was poisoned by his own wife, instigated by the rival political faction. He is buried in Medina. His brother, Hussein, the third imam, fell in an unequal fight, together with all his sons excepting one, Imam Ali, known as Zein-el-Abdeen. It is the tragic death of Hussein that is mourned by the Shiite world during the month of Muharram.

His son, the only survivor, Imam Ali, was also a victim to poisoning and was buried in Medina. The same fate fell to his two successors, Imam Mohammed, known as El Bager, buried in Medina, and Imam Jaffar, called El Sadiff, whose tomb is also in the same sacred city.

Imam Musa, or El Kadim, is buried in Kazmain and his mosque has been described in a former chapter. The eighth imam, Ali-el-Riga, died a natural death in the chief town of Khorasan, Meshed, in Eastern Persia, where he is buried. Imam Mohammed-el-Djerad, buried in Kazmain, was the ninth imam. His successor, Ali-el-Hadi, is buried in Samara, near Bagdad. Then follows Imam Hassan-el-Askeri, buried in Kazmain, and finally Imam Mehdi, the twelfth in number and buried in Samara. He is called the imam of the last days, as the Shiites believe that he will appear together with Jesus Christ at the day of judgment.

From the time of Imam Ali began the split in the Moslem world, forming the Sunnite sect and that of the Shiite, the followers of the imams. The tragic end of

many of the imams increased the bitter feeling which exists down to the present day and which is fanned by the fact of so many of the sacred places of the Shiites being found in Turkey, a Sunnite empire. The geographical division of these two sects may be given in general terms as follows:

The Shiites form the majority in Persia, the Caucasus and India, while the Sunnites predominate in Turkey, the Crimea, Central Asia, Western China and Africa.

Pilgrimages are obligatory in the Moslem religion, and those undertaking them are sure of an easy entrance into Paradise. Mecca and Medina are the chief places for both sects equally, but in addition the Shiites have the following: Meshed, in northeastern Persia, where Imam Riza is buried, and the cities of Kazmain, Samara, Kerbela and Nedjef, in Turkish Arabia. Certain places of pilgrimage give titles to those visiting them. These in order of consequence and rising order of importance are the right of prefixing to the name of one having been to Meshed "Meshedi"; "Kerbeli" to one who has been in Kerbela; and finally "Hadji," the highest reward for the pilgrimage to Mecca. In this way an Ahmed may, during a long lifetime, be known successively as Meshedi Ahmed, then Kerbeli Ahmed, and finally, to the end of his days, as Hadji Ahmed. The last title is the most respected, and when the caravan of pilgrims return to their native lands the inhabitants of towns and villages flock out to kiss the hands, and even the clothing of those who have been worthy of making the Hadj pilgrimage.

The Persian and Caucasian pilgrims go on horseback, in caravans of from two hundred to three hundred each, and march with banners flying and as they approach villages chanting their sacred hymns. Their journey is from five to six months' duration or more. Going to Kerbela

they cross the Turkish frontier at Khanakin, and avoiding Bagdad go direct to Kazmain to pray at the tomb of Imam Musa and several of his successors buried there. From Kazmain to Kerbela, fifty-seven miles from Bagdad, and then to Nedjef, forty-six miles farther on. From Nedjef a part may go on by camel through the desert to Mecca. Others who have not the means return home as Kerbelis.

The long journey between Nedjef and Mecca is one of great fatigue and hardships and as such is considered the most pleasing to God, while those who fall by the way, as so many do in each caravan, are blessed beyond their fellows, as for them the door of Paradise stands more than ajar. This hope makes the pilgrim face the terrors of this march with a light heart in spite of epidemics, fatigues, and other dangers of the desert route. Many feeling that the end of their days is drawing near move to Kazmain, Kerbela, Nedjef, Meshed and Mecca, that the angel of death may find them already on sacred soil.

Pilgrimages are undertaken in stated months of the Mohammedan lunar year; such months are Redjeb, Shaban, Ramadan, Zelhadjie, Muharram and Safar.

When the caravans reach Turkish Arabia they generally march at night to avoid the heat of day, and during our wanderings in the desert we would often be roused out of a sleep at night by the dong, dong of the camel bells and the weird chanting of the pilgrims that rang out afar in the deathlike stillness of the desert, and we knew it was a caravan of pilgrims passing our camp.

But aside from the necessity of performing these pilgrimages, the Shiites have another belief, based on the scholastic interpretation of their sacred writings. To obtain that Paradise which they hold not in a spiritual, but material sense, it is sufficient if the body of one who during his lifetime has not been able to make the pilgrim-

BAGDAD TYPE

age, be carried for burial in sacred soil. From this arises the most pernicious custom of taking bodies for burial to Meshed, Kerbela or Mecca, according to the means of the individual. During the cool months, particularly, one may meet long caravans going to Kerbela, the animals laden with long narrow boxes, four to each horse. The usual rule is to exhume the bodies for transport five to six years after death, but very frequently this rule is not carried out, and the bodies are taken but a short time after death, or again many years later. Sometimes a grandson will take the bones of his father and grandfather at the same time. The Turkish Government has laid customs duties on these bodies and the revenue thus obtained is considerable, for as many as ten thousand and upwards are brought into Turkey annually. The Persians are so accustomed to this strange tariff law that they look upon it as a matter of course.

To illustrate the peculiar morals of the rite I will cite an incident told me by a European physician who had been sent to study the pilgrimage routes from a sanitary point of view. Entering Persia by Tabriz he engaged two highly recommended servants, Persians, and started down by the usual caravan route into Turkey. At Khanakin, on the frontier, where there is a sanitary post, the usual customs examination took place in the presence of the local sanitary physicians. While the two colleagues, Turkish and European, exchanged views unanimously denouncing the dangerous practice of carrying so many bodies through the populated countries, the customs officials were busy with the doctor's baggage. With unmoved faces they began to take from the various places human bones in view of determining how many bodies were brought. The doctor was speechless with amazement and horror as he saw bone after bone drawn out, not only from his valises, but from the bags containing

his provisions for the road—flour, rice, et cetera—his servants coolly greeting each new discovery with "That's a part of my father," or grandmother, as the case might be. It seems that the men had profited by what they considered a good opportunity of smuggling the bones of some of their relatives across the frontier, as they did not expect the physician's belongings would be subjected to examination.

In passing it may be of interest to note that the smugglers of saffron take advantage of this Shiite custom. Saffron is grown in the district of Kaen and a few other places in Persia and the Caucasus. In Kaen saffron has a standard value and is often used as a means of exchange instead of money. Being extremely light it is priced at a little less than its weight in gold and is subject to a very heavy entrance duty in Turkey. To avoid this I have known of cases where it was smuggled through the customs houses in the long yellow bones of bodies brought for burial! This process was continued until the sharp-eyed customs officials discerned this novel form of contraband.

From Bagdad to Kerbela caravanserais are built in the desert for the convenience of pilgrims. Everywhere in Persia and Turkey these caravanserais are built on one and the same general plan. They present a huge, square building. A large gateway leads into a spacious court where the camels and horses are unloaded. Around this court are buildings, a part of which serve as stables, and a part, the latter generally two-storied, as rooms for travellers. These are small, cell-like apartments, each with door and window opening onto the court, and are occupied by from three to four persons, according to the size of the caravanserai. Women are roomed separately. Some of these caravanserais have as many as eighty rooms, and a correspondingly large accommodation for horses. These caravanserais are generally hired out to

some one who makes his profit on the food and fodder he sells, as the rooms are nominally free, the traveller on leaving being supposed to give a fee according to his means. Caravans carrying bodies stop at these caravanserais also, the coffins being piled up in the court as the horses are unloaded just as if they were bales of merchandise. Once in going to Kerbela I had just stopped in a caravanserai, tired with a long march, and had made myself comfortable for a night's rest, when at dusk one of these caravans came in. The result was that in spite of our fatigue we had to leave, as the stench at such close quarters was intolerable.

Kerbela is surrounded on all sides by the remains of ancient irrigating canals, serving now only as receptacles for stagnant rain water that form marshes, a hotbed of epidemic-breeding miasms. The town of Kerbela is on the right side of the Euphrates, about eighteen miles from the river and some sixty from Bagdad. Of the sixty-five thousand inhabitants fully fifty-four thousand are Shiites. The city itself is on the site where Hussein fell, which gives to this town and its surroundings special sanctity in the eyes of the Shiites. This explains the fact that up to the nineteenth century the Shiites, as represented by the Persians, made every attempt to get this, to them, holy place out of the hands of their religious enemies, the Turks. Profiting by the strength and independence of their position the Persian Shiites have frequently risen and tried to throw off the hated Turkish yoke. The last such rebellion was crushed by Sultan Abdul Medjed in 1842. From this date the discontent of the Shiites has expressed itself only in disorders that have broken out from time to time without having, however, any serious consequences.

Irrigation is carried on by means of water obtained in the most primitive way from wells, but in spite of this difficulty palm groves abound, and the city itself is sur-

rounded by a belt of gardens. The inhabitants are almost entirely Persian and Indian Shiites, who have gathered here, drawn partly by religious sentiment, and partly by commerce, which is entirely in their hands. The city grows constantly, and at present the population is estimated at eight thousand houses, or about forty-five thousand souls. During the pilgrim season the city is not able to house the multitudes; many of the pilgrims therefore live in their camps. From money contributed by the pilgrims schools are supported, which form the seat of theological learning. Of these schools are three grades, lower, middle and high. In Kerbela live sayids, the highest ecclesiastics, who consider themselves to be direct descendants of Mohammed and whose outward mark is the green turban and belt of the same colour.

Since Kerbela serves as one of the great burying places of the bodies brought to Turkey, certain professions connected with it flourish—as grave-diggers, stone-cutters and men who prepare little mud or square earthen tablets called torbas. This last profession needs a few words of explanation. While performing their devotions the Shiites generally use these torbas made from the sacred earth of Kerbela, Nedjef or Mecca, and when, as is prescribed, they bend forward they touch their foreheads to these tablets instead of to the ground, so that they can always feel as if they were actually praying on sacred soil. Every pilgrim takes not only one or more of these torbas for his own use, but carries home a good number to give as most highly prized relics to his home friends. In this way the Kerbela merchants dispose of an enormous number yearly. The inhabitants of Kerbela and Nedjef, as in fact of every sacred city, of whatever sect or religion, get their living from the pilgrims, whom they fleece in a most heartless manner.

But aside from these gains, contributions flow into

Kerbela from all over the Shiite world. These offerings are of two kinds: in the form of gold and silver and precious stones, or as real estate given to one or another mosque, the revenue from which goes to the support of schools, or to other benevolent objects. The most generous gifts come from India. For instance, the monthly contribution for the support of poor sayids amounts to $12,000. Land belonging to these mosques is to be found not only in Turkey but all over Persia, India and China. Special buildings are put up for storing the rich gifts brought to the shrines. These are under the special guardianship of an officer known as the kelled-dar, or key keeper, who generally amasses a very considerable fortune. The property of some kelled-dars has been estimated as high as $2,500,000. It is true that each pilgrim is supposed to give the kelled-dar something, but this is not obligatory, nor can it be the only source of such riches.

Since the visit of Naser-ed-Deen in the seventies of the nineteenth century the kelled-dars have been obliged to inscribe in a special book all gifts exceeding one hundred and fifty dollars; up to that time even this was not done. To form some idea of the vastness of these contributions it is enough to mention one fact. During the visit of Naser-ed-Deen Shah he obtained permission of the then reigning sultan, Abdul Aziz, to open the vaults in which the treasures were stored. From these were taken out seventy-seven tons weight of valuable ornaments, vessels, etc., that were sold, but the most rare and precious articles were kept, as a lamp made from one enormous emerald, a carpet of pearls, golden candlesticks set with rubies, ancient armour encrusted with precious stones, the gifts of sultans and Indian Nabobs. There were many other articles of great value, among which may be mentioned a dagger priced at twenty thousand Turkish pounds.

The treasures of the shrines of Kerbela and Nedjef have been estimated at thirty million Turkish pounds, not including capital and real estate that are to be found scattered in various parts of the world, the income of which goes, as has been said, to the support of schools and other benevolent objects.

As a greater part of these offerings come from India, the English consul at Bagdad has succeeded in getting the right, to a certain extent, of the control over the expenditure of these sums. The chief control is, however, in the hands of Mudjtaheids, who play so important a rôle in the life of the Shiites. The Sunnites do not accept them, but the most popular of the Persian Mudjtaheids have always lived in Turkey, in the towns of Kerbela, Nedjef, Kazmain and Samara. Living thus abroad and in a foreign and to them religiously opposed country has never prevented these ecclesiastics from exerting a powerful influence upon their co-religionists in Persia and elsewhere.

The chief mosque of Kerbela is where Imam Hussein is buried, the dome and six minarets of which are covered with gold-leaf valued at 100,000 Turkish pounds. Inside of this mosque there is a separate division for Sunnites, who, however, have their own mosque as well.

The second mosque of the city is over the grave of Imam Abbas, which, though fine, is in many ways inferior to the first. With the exception of these two mosques there is nothing worthy of interest in the city, unless it be the cemetery, the vastness of which is striking. In fact the entire city and its immediate surroundings may be counted as one huge burying ground. Fulfilling the rites prescribed to the pilgrims in Kerbela, they go on to Nedjef, lying fifty miles to the south on the edge of the Syrian desert called the Shamieh.

Nedjef is the administrative centre of the province of

the same name, with a population of ten thousand, of which nine thousand three hundred are Shiites and only seven hundred Sunnites, and they belong for the most part to the Turkish administration. This is explained by the reluctance of the Shiites to having their religious enemies, the Sunnites, living in their most sacred cities. The city of Nedjef itself is on a lake called the Sea of Nedjef, the waters of which are so salty that the inhabitants are obliged to get their drinking water from the city of Cufa, three miles distant on the old Hindieh canal. This state of things continued until a lady pilgrim from India took pity on the inhabitants of the sacred city and at an expense of 20,000 Turkish pounds brought water from the Hindieh canal into the city of Nedjef.

The mosque where lies Ali is the only remarkable building, and by its size and commanding position is exceedingly imposing. Its dome and four minarets are covered with pure gold, the gift of Nadir Shah, that cost him more than one and a half million dollars. Though the city is surrounded by walls that conceal the building inside, the gold-covered domes and minarets tower above them and are to be seen at a great distance by the approaching caravan of pilgrims, who are filled with reverent awe at the sight. This city, too, is one vast burying ground that overflows beyond the walls.

Cufa, or Kufa, the city once known in Mohammedan history, was founded in 639 A.D. It was formerly the centre of Moslem culture, the home of artists and writers. Here originated the famous Cufic characters seen and admired on so many ancient inscriptions. At the present time Cufa is a miserable little hamlet avoided by pilgrims as the cursed spot where Ali fell.

Finally there is to be mentioned Samara, above Bagdad, on the left bank of the Tigris. This, too, is a small town having a population of not more than two thousand and

seventy-five souls, and attracts pilgrims only as here is to be found the tomb of Imam Mehdi, the last imam, who is to come at the end of the world. Here, too, bodies are brought for burial.

All of these places represent in fact burying grounds, where the living are in constant contact with the dead, where the houses are built over graves and are not infrequently parts of sepulchres where the very soil is formed of decayed human bodies. All of these conditions make it easy to understand that the plague and cholera often break out first in one and then another part of Turkish Arabia.

The Samara mosque is much inferior in richness to that of Kerbela and Nedjef, but notwithstanding this fact when we were in Bagdad all pilgrims passing that way visited Samara. They were not attracted there so much by desire to worship at the shrine as to see the most popular Mudjtaheid, Hadji Mirza Hassan Shirazi, so called as he was born in Shiraz, though then living in Samara. This Mudjtaheid was a most striking personality, that will go down as a marked figure in Persian history, as being the most popular and powerful leader that the Shiite world ever possessed.

I knew him when he was over seventy years of age, when his feeble steps were obliged to be supported as he went daily to the mosque, where much of his time was spent. His devotees flocked from all points of the Moslem world—Russia, Persia, India and Bokhara. There were days when many thousands lined the streets through which he passed on his way to the mosque, and those who succeeded in kissing his hand considered themselves as blessed—the majority when they had failed to even touch his garments were content to kiss the threshold of the mosque over which he had passed.

Hadji Mirza Hassan was a man not of this world. Re-

MOSQUE OF IMAM, MUSA, KAZMAIN (FRONT VIEW)

ceiving thousands of dollars in voluntary offerings, he gave all to the poor, living in the most simple manner, and no one ever went away from him without receiving counsel and material aid. While being a zealous Mohammedan and the best theologian of his time, he was no fanatic, and had a broad tolerance of other faiths. At one time I had a correspondence with him upon a point interesting us both. As I was a Christian, he could not address me in the terms usually employed in Mohammedan correspondence, but his letters to me always began with the words, "Peace be upon all those who follow in the paths of God."

These letters were always modest, and the style clear and simple, free from any of the flowery extravagance of phraseology so much adopted by Oriental writers.

Aside from his sermons and teaching in the mosque he carried on an enormous correspondence with his colleagues in Persia, who recognised him as an authority to whom they turned in all doubtful questions in Mohammedan justice, and theological controversies. Although being of equal clerical rank, every Mudjtaheid in Persia recognised Hadji Mirza Hassan's superiority, based on nothing other than his personality—his competence in judging all judicial and religious points, his perfect fairness and impartiality, and his unapproachable private life. It is not too much to say that while living in Turkey he guided all the Mudjtaheids of Persia, who bowed to his decision without question.

Placing above all else the interest of his colleagues in Persia he many times fearlessly stood forth in their defence, unhesitatingly speaking the truth to the shah himself, and pointing out his mistakes. His influence upon the inhabitants of Persia was very strikingly shown in connection with the tobacco monopoly, when every one in Persia at his command refrained from smoking for seven

weeks. It is to be noted that nowhere is smoking more universal than in Persia, where, without exception, all men and women are given to the habit. Two kinds of tobacco are cultivated in Persia, the ordinary sorts used for cigarettes and a particular kind called tambacu, and used only in the kalian, or water pipe. This latter is famous throughout the Mohammedan world, and is one of Persia's chief articles of export. The kalian plays an important rôle in Persian life. In making a call a Persian takes, or more correctly has carried after him, his pipe, and no call, friendly or on business, no official or social gathering, passes without the ever-present kalian. This is true of all classes of society. During Ramadan, the month of fasting, when from sunrise to sunset nothing can pass the lips of the faithful, the Persian invariably breaks his fast with a puff at the kalian. On the march every rich person has a special man mounted on a horse carrying the kalian with its appendages, water filled from the wayside reservoirs, and live coals hanging from the saddle in wire baskets, ready at any moment for lighting the pipe. In a word, it is impossible to conceive of a Persian, rich or poor, without his kalian.

And suddenly in March, 1890, a treaty was signed by the Persian Government giving the tobacco and tambacu to a foreign monopoly. When the first rumour of this reached the people there was a repressed wave of discontent. They realised that the effect of the monopoly upon the agricultural class would be disastrous, while at the same time the price of tobacco, which the Persian regards as a product of the first importance, would be raised. In March of the following year, 1891, Persia was invaded by a perfect army of employees of the new monopoly who were placed in various cities to establish the monopoly and control the sale of tobacco. The arrival of the foreigners inflamed the already prevailing dis-

content. At first anonymous letters were addressed to the shah and members of his council, the tone of which became more and more menacing as time went on. These letters pointed out to the government, and not without reason, that they were selling the interests of their country. In newspapers published in Constantinople and Egypt began to appear cutting articles directed against the monopoly. In spite of attempts made in the post to confiscate such papers they filtered into the country. Many arrests were made, but without decreasing the feeling that grew and grew in tenseness. Then the clergy appeared upon the scene, taking on themselves the defence of the people's interest. Under the influence of the agitation aroused by them, disorders broke out in Shiraz which were crushed by armed force. Tabriz followed the example of Shiraz, where the disturbance assumed more serious proportions, and the popular local Mudjtaheid, Hadji Mirza Djavad Aga, in his sermons began to denounce the action of the government in ceding the interest of Persia to foreigners. The excited populace mobbed the house of the agent of the company, and the Christian colony began to be in danger. The uprising became so great that it was decided to make an exception in fovour of the province of Azerbaijan, exempting it from having a monopoly instituted there. But this did not help matters, as the disorders had already spread into the provinces of Mazanderan and Khorasan.

Finally, November 21, 1891, the Samara Mudjtaheid, Hadji Mirza Hassan, interfered, sending by telegraph his instructions to all parts of Persia, ordering everyone to refrain from smoking until the monopoly should be entirely abolished throughout the land. And all Persia, not excluding the army and the shah's own harem, stopped smoking. The Mudjtaheid based his order on the fact

that all monopolies are contrary to the spirit of the teachings of the Koran and therefore the products of monopolies must be impure, and as such forbidden.

From this moment the condition of affairs became dangerous. Persia was threatened with a revolution. In December the government made a fresh concession to the effect that the monopoly would be confined to the exported article and not touch the internal sales of tobacco. But this half measure was not accepted. Uprisings continued and on the 23d of December in Teheran itself the shah's palace was surrounded, the mob being dispersed only by force of arms, during which several were killed and wounded. A revolution was imminent. A special council of the ministers was assembled, in which it was decided to appeal to the Mudjtaheids for help in quieting the country. The latter absolutely refused to help the government. Discontent spread into the palace and even to the shah's own harem. Meeting with no backing from any quarter, the government was finally obliged to give in, and in the beginning of June, 1892, in every town of Persia proclamations were issued announcing the absolute and unconditional abolishment of the monopoly. Definite information to the same effect was sent to the Samara Mudjtaheid. Only when entirely convinced of the sincerity of these promises, did Hadji Mirza Hassan remove his ban and give permission to smoke, which was received with great joy by all Persia after seven weeks' abstinence. The government, too, breathed freely after the severe strain of so many months, that had been caused by their false step and which had also involved them in grave financial losses. They were obliged to pay an indemnity of the very considerable amount of 500,000 English pounds to the foreign monopoly, that had, however, expended but 194,000 pounds, of which 139,000 had gone as "presents."

CHAPTER VII

ARABIA, NEJD AND THE WAHABEES

The Camel and its Significance in the Life of the Bedouin—Arabia Geographically—Bible Life as seen at the Present Time—Limits of Territory occupied by Nomadic Arabs—Hadramuth—The Great Desert—Oman, Al Hassa, Nejd and the Nefuds—Cause of Isolation of Nejd—Character of Nefuds—Red Locusts and Samkh as Principal Diet of the Bedouin and His Horse—Travellers who have visited Nejd—Wahabees and Wahabeeism—The Wahabee Kingdom—Occupation of the Hedjaz, Mecca, and Medina by Wahabees—Pillaging the Kerbela Mosque—Raids on Damascus—Expedition of Mehmed Ali Pasha and Ibrahim Pasha—Occupation of Nejd by Egyptian Forces—Fall of Wahabeeism—Struggle for Supremacy—Ibn-al-Rashid—His Popularity—Hayil—Abuse of Pilgrims—Climate of Nejd—Slavery—Nejd the Cradle of the Arabs—Mesopotamia—El Jezira—El Irak—Shamiya—Suffering in Years of Drought—Importance of the Camel in the Bedouin's Life—Pacing Camels—One-Humped and Two-Humped Camels—Examples of Endurance—Shortcomings of Camels—Examples of Camels' Vengeance.

To form a correct estimate of Bedouins, it is not enough to have an acquaintance with the Arabs in Mesopotamia nor those migrating in the desert lying west of the Euphrates. It is necessary to touch upon that part of the Asiatic continent included between the Red Sea to the west, the Indian Ocean to the south, the Persian Gulf to the south and southeast, and the Tigris River up as far as its source to the east and north.

All this huge tract is inhabited by Arabs, a people of Semitic race, once playing a brilliant rôle in history, but now represented by only half-savage, nomadic people

preserving to the present day many of the customs and characteristics of the time of Abraham, who is held by them to be the founder of their race. To understand the Bible pictures it is enough to travel in Arabia, and there we have before us the living pictures in brightest colours of the stories told in that great book. How many times when passing Arab camps, or at the wells where the flocks and herds were being watered, did we witness the scenes that are given with such epic simplicity in the Bible! The same "black tents of Kedar," the same types, and probably the same dress as then. Wonderfully little has changed in the life of these people. And how absurd to us then seem the Bible pictures we are accustomed to see from childhood; for instance, Abraham seated on a bench or chair in front of his house, receiving the three strangers, and Sarah listening behind a door!

The nomadic Arabs occupy a large area of the Arabian peninsula and a portion of the continent of Asia running up to the Iran plateau. The boundary of their country may be roughly traced as follows: To the west, towards the shores of the Red Sea, the eastern extremity of the Turkish provinces of the Hedjaz and the Yemen. Farther to the south of Aden, touching the Indian Ocean, is a place known as Hadramuth, which merges into deserts that are yet unexplored, and that are known to the Arabs as "Al Dahma," and which occupy almost one-third of the Arabian peninsula. Farther, beyond the Hadramuth along the shores washed by the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf, from Merbaga to the peninsula of Katara, are the domains of the sultan, or imam, of Oman. Then follows another narrow strip on the sea front, the Turkish province of Al-Hassa, a flowering oasis occupied by the Turks only since 1870. It is therefore clear that the tract inhabited by the Arabs touches on its western frontier the Turkish provinces of the Hedjaz and the

Yemen; on the south and southeast the Hadramuth, the country of the Sultan of Oman, and from the east Al-Hassa. Farther north than the Persian Gulf, the frontier can be said in general to be the Shaat-el-Arab, and then the Iran plateau, to the mountains of Tekrit, from where it follows the Tigris river almost to its source, on the north. Finally Syria and Palestine on the west towards the Mediterranean Sea. Along the Red Sea, Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf run a chain of mountains rising in places to several thousand feet, and these shut off the Arabian peninsula proper from the sea. Inside of the barrier formed by the mountains and then the desert, is a mountainous plateau known as Nejd or "high lands," the cradle of the Arab race. Nejd is surrounded on all sides by the Nefuds, arms of the great desert "Dahna," running like gigantic fingers around Nejd. Nejd is thus guarded, as the waterless Nefuds make access to it so difficult as to explain the reason of this spot being so little known. The soil of the Nefuds is fine red sand, forming wave-like undulations that follow the direction of the prevailing winds. The huge petrified billows, as it were, sometimes have a height of 350 feet. This place reminds one of the sand dunes of Kara-Kum in Central Asia between the Amu-Dara and Bokhara, now crossed by the railway. The only difference is that the latter are on a far smaller scale.

Under the burning rays of the sun these red sand waves seem to the weary eyes of the traveller like a bloody sea, and not even every Arab will dare, during the hottest months, to cross the dreadful Nefuds even on a swift dromedary. The extent of the danger can be judged by a fact well known in Bagdad, of a daring Bedouin who crossed these burning plains in the summer on horseback. On arriving in Bagdad, his horse's hocks were burned and cracked as if seared with a hot iron, and the scars

thus left were afterwards covered by white hair. It is a mistake, however, to picture the Nefuds as being at all seasons of the year barren deserts. In the springtime, after the rainy season, they are covered luxuriantly with a particularly juicy nourishing grass, and the Nejd Bedouins send their mares there to pasture, accompanied by she-camels. As no water is to be found in the Nefuds, the mares, as well as the herdsmen, drink camel's milk, the camels themselves, owing to the exceedingly juicy grass, being able to do without water during the two to two and one-half months that they annually spend there. To each mare is usually allowed the milk of one camel.

During the winter on account of its altitude and sandy soil it often freezes, the thermometer dropping as low as five below the freezing point R. at night, and rising to twenty above by day. Occasionally, though rarely, snow falls.

Aside from reptiles, lizards, etc., the Nefud fauna includes a special form of humped antelope, called by the Arabs "bakkar vanash" or wild cow, of which the Arab poets of the golden age sang; also ostriches, hares and gazelles, which latter, according to Arab belief, never need water. But in spite of this superstition, these graceful creatures when tormented by thirst often find their death in wells, causing despair to the traveller who, parched with thirst, is obliged to drink of the contaminated water. We had several gazelles in Bagdad as pets. The females become tame very quickly and are gentle and affectionate, but the males are often very fierce, attacking from behind and overthrowing a grown person. One of these wounded one of my horses by running his sharp horn deeply into the animal's side.

In the Nefuds are to be found red locusts. Whereas the locust brings dread to the heart of the farmer, here, in the Nefuds, the Bedouins bless their appearance. As

ARAB GUIDES

soon as a flight of locusts is seen all the inhabitants of the desert, men, women and children, go out to catch them. Removing the wings, they dry them and make a sort of flour, laying in supplies for a year or more. This flour is one of the mainstays of the Bedouin in this part of Arabia, as well as of his horse. The Bedouins say that the locust flour is twice as nourishing to their horses as the same quantity of barley would be.

In other parts of Arabia a plant called samkh is one of the principal articles of diet. The seed of this plant is ground in hand mills and the flour baked. Dates are also one of the great dependences of the nomads. Camel's meat and mutton, the Bedouins eat very seldom, and then on such special occasions as when guests arrive, or some other ceremonial.

Nejd and indeed much of Central Arabia are very little known, owing to their isolated position and the hardships to be endured by the traveller who braves the journey, and therefore Europeans who have done so are easily numbered. During the past century one of the earliest was an Englishman, Captain Sadler, who was sent by the British Government in 1819 to congratulate Ibrahim Pasha after his victory over the Wahabees. He crossed the peninsula through the desert from east to west from the port of Katiff on the Persian Gulf to Yambo on the Red Sea. His account of this difficult journey was printed in a report that had a limited circulation and was therefore unavailable to the general readers, and only fragmentary quotations are to be found in a book by General Tweedie, formerly British consul general in Bagdad.

In 1862-63 Palgrave crossed the Nefuds from the port of Gaza on the Mediterranean to Katiff on the Persian Gulf. In 1864 an Italian horse dealer, the Levantine Gvarman, went from Palestine to Nejd, and a year later

an English officer, Pelly, made the journey from Quete, on the Persian Gulf, to Riad, the capital of Nejd, from which point he descended to the Gulf of Bahrein.

In 1876-78 Doughty, an Englishman, crossed and recrossed all the central and western part of the peninsula. His daring journeyings, and above all, the conditions under which he undertook them, are little known to the public, but deserve to be classed among the most remarkable and difficult expeditions of the nineteenth century.

In 1878-79 the English traveller Lady Anne Blunt (the granddaughter of Lord Byron), accompanied by her husband, passed through the desert from Beyrout to Hayil and Bagdad, cutting in this way clear through the peninsula.

Finally, in 1892, a Russian traveller, Baron Nolde, whose adventurous life had a most tragic end, visited Nejd. He passed from Beyrout to Damascus, Khaf, Djof, Hayil, and returned by way of Nedjef, Kerbela and Bagdad.

Thanks to its isolated and inaccessible position, Nejd has been able to preserve, up to the present time, its independence. Not only that, but in the beginning of the last century it startled the entire Mohammedan world when the ruler of Nejd seized Mecca and Medina, continued his expedition through Syria as far as Damascus, menacing the integrity of Turkey, and founded, under the influence of religious fanaticism, the Wahabee kingdom.

We can compare the Wahabee sect, in its attitude towards Moslemism, to the Protestants among Christians. The name was derived from the founder of the sect, Mohammed Ibn Abdul Wahaba, who began his teachings in the second half of the eighteenth century. It was founded on a desire to re-establish the Koran teachings in their original simplicity and purity and to clear away

the mass that had been formed by commentators and legends, as Wahaba considered these as only perverting the real doctrine taught by the great Prophet. Starting from this point Mohammed Ibn Abdul Wahaba considered both Shiites and Sunnites, or, in other words, the whole of the Mohammedan world, as "enemies of Islam," and as such declared against them relentless warfare.

In defending their position the Wahabees cite a long series of divergencies from the Koran, which the Moslems have admitted. They in particular denounce "tekkes" of Mohammedan dervishes, circumcision, mosques, protest against luxury, the use of rich garments, against tobacco, and consider a priesthood unnecessary, etc. These doctrines found ready hearers among the simple Bedouins unused to luxury, and still more so among the weaker tribes, which, as soon as their allegiance was promised, Mohammed Ibn Abdul Wahaba protected, and so gradually all the Bedouins of Nejd became his followers.

The sect gained in strength, particularly after the powerful ruler of the province of Derej, Mohammed Ibn Sau'd, declared himself as the first Wahabee emir, and his successors, Abdul Aziz and Sau'd, brought under their sway the whole of Cenral Arabia. Gradually the sacred cities—the Palestine of Islam—Mecca and Medina fell into their hands, and pilgrims found access to them only after obtaining the permission of the Wahabees.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century the actual power of the Wahabees extended far beyond the limits of Nejd. They sacked the famous mosque of Kerbela, massacred the inhabitants, insulted the tomb of the Imam Hussein, so deeply venerated by Shiites, and then, entirely controlling the Kaaba, caused a thrill of horror to pass through the Islamic world. They continued their invasions into Irak and Syria, forcing Damascus to pay a trib-

ute. Matters were growing serious, but the Porte, occupied with European complications, could only depute the Egyptian viceroy, Mohammed Ali Pasha, to fit out an expedition to occupy the Hedjaz.

In 1811 the energetic viceroy raised an army of ten thousand men, which he sent under the command of his son, Tusun Pasha. At that time the ruler of Nejd, Sau'd, was contemplating descent upon Bagdad, but on learning of the movements of Tusun Pasha he abandoned his intentions.

The Wahabees proved to be obstinate in their defence, and Mohammed Ali Pasha was obliged to take command of a new force that marched to his son's aid. But even this reinforcement was not sufficient, and finally in 1816 a fresh army was sent under Ibrahim Pasha. This last army, after many defeats and hardships, succeeded in entering Nejd and in taking several minor cities and laying siege to Derei, the then capital of Nejd. At this date the ruler was Abdullah, the son of Sau'd. Derei held out against the siege for six months, but was finally taken through the personal bravery of Ibrahim Pasha. Abdullah was obliged to surrender and forced to return the spoils he had taken from mosques. Derei was razed to the ground and in 1818 Abdullah was executed in Constantinople. From that time the fall of the Wahabee kingdom began, but the Egyptian army continued to occupy Riad up to 1842. From the time of the withdrawal of the Egyptian forces a series of struggles began among rival pretenders to the emirship, until finally Mohammed Ibn-al-Rashid, the ruler of Hayil, better known as Ibn Rashid, succeeded in 1872 in making himself the sole ruler of all Nejd.

Ibn Rashid reached the height of his power only after stepping over the dead bodies of all his near relatives. He was a typical Oriental usurper, but a person of strik-

ing historical interest, reminding one in his political views of the late Abdurrahman Khan, emir of Afganistan. When we went to Bagdad Ibn Rashid was at the height of his power and enjoyed great popularity, not only among the peninsular Arabs but among those of Mesopotamia and the Syrian desert as well. He had removed his capital from Riad to Hayil, a small town of only ten thousand inhabitants in the southeast part of Nejd. Ibn Rashid resided there only during the four hottest months, living the rest of the year as a Bedouin in the desert or fighting with unruly tribes, and from such raids he always returned victorious and with rich spoils.

The city of Hayil is surrounded by mud walls and the "palace" itself is strongly fortified. Ibn Rashid's palace is a huge pile of buildings composed of numberless small rooms opening into long corridors that surround courtyards. Adjoining the palace is a garden in which there are many fine gazelles. The water for irrigating this garden as well as for the extremely small plots of ground planted with date palms, barley and wheat, is obtained from wells by animal power. As the cultivation is so limited, grain is brought to Hayil from Bagdad and Bassorah.

In this palace Ibn Rashid personally sits in judgment and the humblest of his subjects has free access to him. Here, too, he has an enormous kitchen in which he takes great pride. Food is prepared not only for Ibn Rashid's family, servants and retinue, but for the numerous Bedouins that come in from the distant parts of the desert. In all as many as two hundred are thus fed daily, and for this large family seven camels or forty sheep are slaughtered each day. The kitchen is built to meet such demands, with kettles so vast that in each one the meat of three camels can be boiled!

Another pride of Ibn Rashid is his stud, in which

many thoroughbred mares of great value are to be found. Many of the mares he buys of desert sheikhs, whom he forces to sell at his own price; it is not to be wondered at, therefore, that owners of blood mares take every pains to conceal them from Ibn Rashid. The rest of his mares are the results of his victorious raids or "ghazus."

His annual revenue is very considerable, being, it is said, three hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars above his expenditures. The source of his income is derived largely from war spoils, from considerable taxes levied on subjugated tribes, and a goodly sum from pilgrims to Mecca and Medina who pass through Hayil. This last is obtained by hiring camels for them from the Bedouins. For instance, from Hayil to Nedjef, twenty days' hard march through a waterless waste, he pays the Bedouin ten medjidiehs for each camel, but charges the pilgrim twice that price! As these caravans are often made up of from four to five thousand camels yearly, it is easy to conceive that the revenue thus received is very considerable. With each caravan Ibn Rashid sends a trustworthy man known as the Emir-al-Hadj, or the leader of the caravan, who settles the marching and halting places, etc., etc. These Emir-al-Hadjs in turn also fleece the poor pilgrims, as in stopping where there are no wells and refusing to move the camp until a sum of money is laid down. So difficult is the twenty days' march through the burning desert with scanty water that fifteen per cent. of the camels usually die, when the pilgrims are obliged to walk and to carry their goods as well. Many human lives, too, are lost in the terrible Nefuds, and such unfortunate ones find a hastily dug and nameless grave in the desert. During the reign of Ibn Rashid's predecessor, Tallal, entire caravans were, with his connivance, left by their guides to perish of thirst, the belongings of which were afterwards brought to Tallal.

This is no longer practised, Ibn Rashid guaranteeing the safety of the caravans he guides. It is necessary here to notice that before the opening of the Suez Canal the number of pilgrims following this route was very much greater than at the present time.

The climate of Nejd is very healthy; here and there are to be found inhabited oases, as, for instance, those of Riad, Monfug and Harag. Throughout Nejd slavery is to be met with. The slaves are black, and, as is almost universal in the East, are well treated by their masters.

If I have dwelt so long on Nejd, it is because every Arab, be he a wanderer in Mesopotamia or Syria, always keeps in touch with Nejd and in tracing his ancestors is sure to run up against one who left Nejd. A wandering Nejddian will always find himself treated with a certain consideration by other tribes who have long left the common cradle of their race. The Arab prizes his genealogy, but not in the sense known to Europeans. Family aristocracy or nobility is not known, nor can they understand the *raison d'être* of our titles. Every Bedouin is in himself an aristocrat; this he sees in the pureness of his blood traced through a long line of ancestors who married maidens of the same tribe, or of another equally pure Bedouin tribe. As a rule Bedouins prefer to marry among near relatives, an act which is permitted by their religion and encouraged by the tradition of the Prophet Mohammed's having charged the Arabs to preserve the pureness of their blood. This is evidently a relic of Judaism, reminding us of Sarah, who was the half sister of Abraham.

Let us now turn to glance at that part of the Asiatic continent peopled by Arabs, known as Mesopotamia, and to the tracts lying west of the Euphrates. The entire northern part of Mesopotamia, forming a triangle with Bagdad and Mossoul at the base, and Aleppo at the point,

is called by the Arabs "El Jezira," or cut off, or island. I was never able to understand the derivation of the name nor how in the flat desert with few landmarks the Arabs could always define its boundaries. "We are now entering Jezira," our guides would say; one looks about and only sees as far as the horizon a flat tamarisk-covered desert without sign of life.

South of El Jezira the rest of Mesopotamia, down to the juncture of the Tigris and Euphrates, is known to the Arabs as El Irak. On the other side the wide tract stretching west of the Euphrates to the confines of Palestine and Syria and to the mountains of Jeb-el-Shama to the south is called Shamiya or desert. Between the Shamiya and the mountains of Jeb-el-Shamiya are to be found the Nefuds. Throughout all this vast space are nomadic Arabs of various tribes who migrate according to the seasons of the year from one part to another, from their winter to their summer camping grounds. The physical conditions of the Shamiya are nearly the same as those to be found in the Arabian peninsula, with this difference, that in the Shamiya Bedouins camp nearer to inhabited places and more often find water. The last named difference gives, of course, a great advantage, especially during the rainless season of the year, when many wells go dry. At such times the Shamiya Bedouins follow the course of the Euphrates, for those of the Arabian peninsula often perish in large numbers, losing first their horses and finally the camels, without which existence is impossible. Indeed, the life of the Arab is closely dependent on that of the camel. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Arabian poets of the Golden Age dedicated entire poems to the camel, and that in every literary work of that time, whatever its subject, references were made to the she-camel. Whether Arabia be the original home of the camel, scholars have not decided, but cer-

GROUP OF ARABS SHOWING THE "KAFIYAH" OR HEAD-DRESS

tainly there is no creature so well adapted to the conditions of that inhospitable land. Oman and Nejd are specially famed for their camels, and each district of these countries has its particular breed noted for one or another quality. For instance, there are pack camels, pacing dromedaries of dhalul, that run with so smooth a gait that it is possible to sleep while riding, and they are therefore called naami (sleep).

Particular in preserving the pureness of their own blood, Arabs are equally careful in their camel and horse breeding. The camel is held as almost sacred by the Arabs. From its back the Prophet delivered eloquent sermons, on its back he fled from Medina, even the very name of his favourite she-camel has come down to us, El-Kaswa.[1]

The camel has a part in the religious ceremonies connected with the payment of "the price of blood," where a murderer is obliged to give a certain number of camels as the price of the man he has killed. In enumerating certain objects or animals an Arab will say "so many head" or "so many," but in speaking of camels he will say "so many persons (nefer)" in a herd. In this way a herd of ten horses can be described as "ten head," but a herd of camels as "ten persons." Finally the camel is the absolutely necessary factor in the life of both the Bedouin and his horse. The happiest events in the life of a Bedouin are the births of a she-camel, of a son and of a she-foal. The young camels are cared for as children, and the nearer on the social ladder the Arab stands to the real Bedouin, the higher rises his love for the camel. Every part of this animal is of use to man. From the hair the

[1] It is interesting to note that the Mohammedans have preserved many details of the intimate life of their great Prophet. We know not only the name of Mohammed's barber, whose grave serves as an object of pilgrimage, but also the name of his favourite mule, Dul Dul, and of his ass, Urfa.

Bedouin makes his mantle and his tent; the camel's milk forms a large part of both his own food and that of his horse—in some cases, indeed, it is the only nourishment they have. Thanks to the camel the Bedouin can travel in waterless places, and on its back are made the raids, or "ghazus." Horses are used only in actual battle. The hard excrement of the camel serves as fuel, and the liquid in waterless places for ablutions. The flesh is also used as food and that of the young camel is regarded as a luxury. Above all other animals it is considered clean, in the Oriental sense of the word. The doctrine of pure and impure objects and creatures forms, as is well known, one of the prominent features in the tenets of Mohammedanism. For instance, in accordance with this teaching, Christians, and particularly wet Christians (that is, whose clothes happen to be wet), and scaleless fishes are counted as unclean. Finally, the camel often saves, at the expense of its own, the life of its master. I do not include here only those who perish from being overridden or of thirst. That is of frequent occurrence. But occasionally the Bedouin kills his camel for the liquid found in its stomach. Or as happened in the following well-known case that took place in Shamiya a number of years ago, and which I will relate. During the winter months there is often a peculiarly cold wind, and although the temperature seldom falls at such times to more than one or two degrees below the freezing point, the Arabs, overtaken by such winds, or "gehan," as they are called, frequently freeze to death. This is explained by the fact of their being little prepared physically to endure cold, nor is their clothing sufficient. Such a wind overtook a raiding party of Arabs, and all perished, with the exception of one ingenious Bedouin who, cutting open his camel's belly, crawled into the warm cavity and thus saved himself.

The Bedouin camels are all branded, the brand of each

owner being registered in a very original way. Near the city of Ana, on the Euphrates, the boundary of Shamiya, are the ruins of a bridge that once spanned what is now a dry river bed. On the stones forming these ruins each Arab registers his own camel's mark for all to get. Just here an interesting parallel may be mentioned. While travelling in the Pamirs where the Kirghizes migrate from the Alai to the Pamirs, we saw on the rocky face of a cliff the register of their horses' brands. These rocks had evidently been used for the same purpose during a long period of time, for the marks showed the gradual progress of civilisation and of art, so to speak—from primitive straight lines to more complicated curves and circles. This parallel proves once more how the same circumstances give rise to identical customs which can in no way be traced to imitation.

From all that has been said it is easy to conceive that the camels and Bedouins are so intimately connected that one can hardly exist without the other. Full of significance, therefore, is the Arab proverb "God created the camel for the Arab and the Arab for the camel."

The best camels come from Oman on the Arabian shore of the Persian Gulf, then follow those of Nejd. The latter are mostly white and grey, those of the Shammar tribes being reddish brown. Black camels are rare. The Arabs consider the one-humped camel to be a native of Arabia and the two-humped as coming from Persia, and they call the latter Bactrian camels. The one-humped camels are more enduring, though they cannot carry as heavy loads as do the two-humped variety. In times of drought a one-humped camel can go as long as five times twenty-four hours without water, whereas the two-humped camels cannot exist for more than three days without drink. This is the cause of the Arabs calling the latter Djemal mai, or water camels.

The Syrian two-humped camel is the greatest weight carrier, being able on long journeys to make as many as seventy miles in twenty-four hours with a load of from four hundred and thirty to five hundred and forty pounds. The Mesopotamian camels are weaker in this respect, carrying under equal circumstances not more than three hundred and sixty pounds. The carefully bred pacing dromedaries are raised in Central Arabia. These animals can make eighty miles in twenty-four hours and as much as ninety miles in thirty hours. In journeys of long distances, seven days or more, they are able to keep up an average of sixty miles in the twenty-four hours. For instance, the messengers of Ibn-al-Rashid, who are sent from Hayil to Bassorah, make this distance, about 500 miles, in six days and nights, but to develop such a breed requires not only skill but love of the beast. Nowhere in the East are camels so well cared for as in Arabia.

All those who have had experience with these "ships of the desert" must, however, admit that they have very serious defects. They are stupid in the extreme, sullen and revengeful. When made to kneel, the camel grumbles loudly; when being mounted, he turns his long neck, showing his teeth, and would bite if he dared. During the march if the rider drowses or is careless the camel will get off the track, browsing on such bushes as he may find and forgetting that a rider or a road exists, quite ready to go on thus for the remainder of his natural days. He will never find the road nor keep to it if left to himself. Not even will he find his way home, and he seems to have no attachment to place nor master. In time of danger if he is pressed to greater speed than he considers just, he will grumble audibly and finally lie down. If he once falls, no power will persuade him to make an effort to rise until his load is removed. Camels are frequently given to stampeding and will then run miles in their fright.

The ill temper of camels, especially at certain times of the year, is something frightful. I shall cite two instances as examples of a camel's vengeance and ill temper. Once I went from Tabriz, the chief city of Azerbaijan, to Urumiah on post horses. Early in the morning, cantering along the plain near the village of Gavalan, I noticed camels grazing not far from the road. One attracted my attention. He was lying near a large rock with outstretched neck and making what seemed to me unusual motions. Several days later, on my return journey, I heard the explanation of the scene. According to the tale of a boy, who had witnessed it from a distance, the camel man had struck the beast, a large male, who turned fiercely upon his master. The man ran for his life towards some large rocks and began to climb, hoping to get out of reach, but the camel overtook him. Raising its long neck the infuriated animal got hold of its victim's leg and pulled him down. Then began a sickening scene. The camel bit and mauled the man and then rolled on him until there was only a flattened mangled mass. All day the camel kept watch over the body, from time to time leaving its grazing to return to crush and roll what was left of his victim. No one dared to approach, for when an attempt was made to drive the camel away, it attacked so fiercely that finally it had to be shot.

Another case was in Meshed. A string of camels was passing along one of the principal streets when a small boy struck one of them with a stick. The camel turned and, seizing the boy, inflicted serious injuries before help could arrive.

CHAPTER VIII

BEDOUINS

What are Bedouins, Hidkaris and Fellaheen—Gradations between their Tribes, Sub-tribes and Families—Care in Preserving Pureness of Blood—Sheikhs, their Significance, Powers and Duties—Customs—Religion—Abstinence of Bedouins and its Cause—Early Hardships—Marriage—Polygamy—Divorce—On What Bedouins Exist—Hunting with Hounds and Falcons—Sheep Raising—Raids—Sheep Lifting—Ghazus—Blood Feuds—The Bedouin in Poetry and in Reality—Explanation of Hospitality of Bedouins—Their Idea concerning Muscovites—Four Seasons of the Bedouin Year—Spring—Migration or "Rahla"—Order of March—Camping—Dry Milk as One of the Chief Items of Bedouins' Diet—Their Period of Hunger—Bedouin's Day—What They Eat during Famine Period—Lack of Water—Diseases—Sacrifices or "Kurban"—Arrival of Guests—Justice—Position of Women.

THE word Bedouin is derived from "badia," desert. The nomadic Arabs thus style themselves, as distinguishing between them and the sedentary or semi-sedentary Arabs, who are given the general term of Hidkari. Arabs who till the land are known as fellaheen. But between these two extremes—the real nomadic desert Bedouin and the farmer fellah—there are many connecting degrees. These may be traced by various outward signs, as the possession of certain domestic animals. The true Bedouin keeps but three of these animals: camels, horses and greyhounds. The richer Bedouins also keep hawks. They do not engage in sheep breeding. When sheep are found among Bedouins it is the exception, not the rule. The next degree is the addition of the ass. The true Bedouin

regards it as a disgrace to ride an ass and looks down upon the Arab who lowers himself by employing this humble beast. Further, if the tribe takes up regular sheep breeding and the greyhound is replaced by the sheep dog, it shows a decided advance towards the industrial state. Finally, the appearance of cattle stamps the tribe as no longer nomadic, but as settled fellaheen. The Bedouins say:

"El hall lil bela,
El djemmel lil hela,
Bal beger,
Lel fakir."

That is, the horse for the gentleman, the camel for the desert, and the bullock for the poor.

The Bedouins are divided into tribes, the tribes into sub-tribes, and the latter into families, and each division has its significance. But however numerous the members of these families may be, they never lose their connection with the original branches and tribe. This connection is kept up by intermarriages, thus preserving the pureness of the blood. Marriages between near relations, such as cousins, are so common as to give rise to the expression "bint'amm," "uncle's daughter," being considered as synonymous with "wife." It is to be noticed that though in all the tongues spoken by Moslems there is a word corresponding to our term wife, it is not considered the proper thing to use it, and all sorts of expressions are employed to evade it. For instance, the polite Persian will speak of the "mother of his son," or the "mother of the light of my eyes" (nuri cheshim), and the Arab, of "my uncle's daughter."

The Bedouins migrating between Aleppo and Nejd are divided into two large and powerful tribes, the Aenizeh and the Shammar. These two main tribes are broken

up into many distinct sub-tribes, but all claim one common origin. The dividing up of large tribes into smaller fractions arises from the necessity of seeking fresh pasture when the increasing number of the tribe makes it necessary. Another cause is sometimes differences of opinion in matters concerning the internal economy of the tribal life—quarrels over pasturages (as of Abraham and Lot of old), choice of sheikhs, etc. In this way we often meet with sub-tribes or families who camp hundreds of miles from each other, but the fact does not prevent them from continuing the intimate family connection. It is impossible to identify a given tribe with any definite locality, for they range over hundreds of miles, according to the season of the year, moving, for instance, from about Nejd up as far as Damascus, some 600 miles in a straight line. The Shammars and Aenizeh have been enemies from of old. This fact gives rise at times to curious complications. If, for instance, a feud arises between two sub-tribes of the Shammars, the weaker of the two will take refuge with the Aenizeh. In this way the Shammar sub-tribe, Saie, went over to the Aenizeh, while several branches of the latter have, in the same way, joined the Shammars.

Besides these great tribes, there are many small ones, as, for example, the Hubeisen, found in the Nefuds, and the Solibah, an unknown tribe. Some travellers have suggested that the latter may be a remnant of a Christian people, from tracing the name of the tribe, Solibah, to "saleb," cross. This is, as yet, open to question. It is, however, a fact that this tribe lives in isolation, never mixing with the Mussulman Arabs, who speak of them as "Kelabn-l'Kala," wild dogs. This tribe is found along a vast extent of territory lying between Nejd and Syria. They possess only asses and live by hunting—so that Arabs say that all the game of the desert belongs to this

tribe. Even their tents are not of the camel's-hair cloth of the Arab, but are made of skins, mostly of the gazelle. They also act as doctors for man and beast, carpenters or what passes for such in the desert, as well as blacksmiths. So the Bedouins are independent upon them in these ways.

The Arabs are able to identify by his appearance a stranger whom they may meet as belonging to this or that tribe. As, for instance, the Shammars by their abnormal height, Sobkars by their short stature and the long spears they carry. The Ruwalas, on the contrary, have short spears; other tribes are recognised by the colour of their burnooses, by their horses, camels, etc.

Each of the tribes and sub-tribes has its own sheikn, chosen by the tribe for special merits, or the position may be hereditary. The sheikh is the chief and remains as such as long as the people will it. He is generally richer than the other members of the tribe, and on him, therefore, rests the burden of hospitality, and his guest tent is always open. He is the judge, the president of the council of elders and of an arbitration court. His decisions are based upon tradition and usage and as such are generally accepted without protest. The sheikh holds court daily in his tent, listens to complaints and quarrels, often of the most intimate family nature, and his decisions are of necessity just, or otherwise they could not be carried out. A sheikh must be not only an impartial judge, but brave in warfare and on ghazus, or raids. Occasionally, however, a ghazu is led, not by the sheikh in person, but by his permission some noted warrior of the tribe who may take his place. In such cases this leader, or "akid," as he is called, lays the plans and carries out the raid. A sheikh who succeeds, by his justice and skill, in settling disputes, and by upholding the rights of his people, is sure of his position and that of his family. A

sheikh must be "open handed," that is, generous. Not only hospitable, but ready to help any member of the tribe who may be in trouble, having lost a horse in a ghazu, or a camel by sickness.

The Bedouin's religion is not complicated. He contents himself with acknowledging in a vague general way Allah as a supreme being, and Mohammed his prophet. The future life, Paradise, is to the Bedouin, as to all Mohammedans, a place of material pleasures. He has no inclination for deeper theological questions, and if you try to find out his views, he will invariably refer you to the sheikh, "who knows all things." The Bedouin's morals are the ethics that govern the desert, according to which theft, unfaithfulness to a trust and inhospitality, are universally denounced. These principles, however, do not hinder raids, for the Arabs consider them to be lawful as directed against a hostile tribe. An unbeliever, or non-Moslem, is, however, outside these moral obligations. To rob and murder an unbeliever, or to betray him is not considered a crime by the Bedouins. It is true that he will not kill or betray an unbeliever who has partaken of his hospitality in his guest tent, but does not hesitate to do so, once the stranger has left his camp. Mullahs or any ecclesiastics are rarely to be found among the Bedouins, except occasionally as an appendage to a rich sheikh. This absence of clergy gives rise to the Turkish definition of the Arabs as a "people who have no religion, whose women wear no drawers, whose saddles lack stirrups and whose bridles have no bits," and this is true. As to education, there is nothing to be said. Bedouins are very suspicious of the art of reading and writing. They say a man who can write risks ruining his whole life by a single stroke of his pen.

A Bedouin is most abstemious; this is one of his chief characteristics and is the result of hunger and hardship

begun in infancy and lasting throughout his life, and there is reason for the Bedouin calling himself "the son of patience." His whole life is one series of privations. A large number of Arabs first see the light, not under a tent, but on the march, by the roadside, and this is a fitting beginning of a life of direst poverty. It is said that Bedouins are strong physically, enduring and healthy. That is true, but only on the principle of the "survival of the fittest." The struggle is too hard for the weak. A delicate person has no place in the Bedouins' life. Such generally die as children, and few Bedouins live to an old age. The birth of a son is an occasion for rejoicing and feasting, according to the means of the parent: the unlucky child, however, meets with a Spartan treatment that is intended to make a man of him if he survives. The newly-born infant is laid, quite naked, in the sand all night, and throughout the day he is exposed to the burning sun. A "baby must be cooked," the Arabs say, if he is ever to be a man. And this is done, not only among nomad tribes, but even among peasant and sometimes city Arabs. As soon as the child can creep, the mother leaves it pretty much to its own devices, and when it can walk, it is allowed to do whatever it has courage for. Up to seven years of age the Bedouin children are as naked as the day they were born. After that age they have a shirt that is worn until it drops off. At the age of five the boys are taught to ride, and at seven years old boys are quite capable of riding the horses to pasture. The children's games are generally imitation of the lives of their elders, raids, sheep lifting, camping, etc., and so from tenderest youth Bedouins learn patiently to endure hunger, thirst, cold and heat. When the cold makes them shiver, the children are comforted by being told that the rainy season will bring grass and plenty of fresh camel's milk; when they languish with heat the prospect of the sweet

dates that can ripen only under such a sun is held out to them.

Boys of ten and twelve take part in hunting expeditions and even raids. Sixteen or seventeen is not considered too young for a boy to be married, and girls are often mothers at the age of thirteen. Accustomed in this way to a life of simplicity and hardship, the Arab looks for nothing better. When told of the glories of civilised Europe, his first question is of the quality and price of dates, and when he finds that they do not grow there, he takes no further interest in Europe or civilisation. But what a Bedouin does appreciate and cling to is personal liberty. His home is the boundless desert. When he finds himself in a city he becomes bewildered and both he and his horse and camel are timid and suspicious. On approaching a town with its close evil smells, the Bedouin begins his preparations by stuffing his nostrils with grass. His camel stops short and obstinately refuses to enter the great city gate, while his horse shies at every open doorway, and the Bedouin hurries to finish his business and hie him back to his native desert.

Polygamy is rarer among Bedouins than among industrial Arabs; on account of the poverty of the former such a luxury is only within the means of the rich, and the sheikhs have generally several wives. Each tent has a portion partitioned off for the women, while each wife of the richer Arab has a tent to herself. Divorces are frequent and given on the grounds generally admitted by Mohammedans. The husband has almost unlimited liberty of divorcing his wife at will, while it is almost impossible for a woman to obtain a divorce owing to the conditions laid down. The husband is obliged to pay the sum that was named in the marriage contract, and this being done, he is quite free from any ill feeling or reprisal on the part of her family. Unfaithfulness to her

marriage vows on the part of the wife gives the husband the right of punishment. He may even kill his wife without any fear of legal consequences, though the relatives of his wife may take up the blood feud.

How does the Bedouin exist? Mostly on what is yielded by the camel, or, more properly, the she-camel, who has fed him from childhood. She gives him food, drink, clothing and all the necessities of his simple housekeeping, tents, string, ropes, made from camel's hair, and even fuel. Only thanks to the she-camel can the Bedouin keep horses, for the mares and colts could not survive without her milk. Thanks to them only can the Bedouin make his long journey through waterless wastes, carry out raids and hunting expeditions, and thanks to them he may even become comparatively rich. Further, the Bedouin lives on what the meagre desert gives him, locusts, "samkh" and "meza'a" that grow in the desert. Hunting with greyhounds and hawks also helps to fill the Arab's pot, but this, of course, is only for the rich. The poorer Arabs snare the animals at their drinking places. In this way they get wild cows, gazelles, and, in mountainous places, wild sheep. Ostriches are to be found in the Nefuds, and in Irak and Shamiya "duradji" (a kind of partridge). Also a bird somewhat like it, called in Persia "bagrikara," black-breast, that is to be found in great abundance in Arabia during the winter months. The Arabian greyhounds are fair specimens of their race. They resemble those kept by the Turkomans in Transcaspia, being, however, somewhat smaller. The hawks are of various breeds. With the larger variety gazelles are chased, while the smaller ones are used for birds. Among the semi-nomadic tribes sheep are a great support. They too can go long without water. In the spring, when the grass is juicy, they are only watered once in several days. During the hot season they can, in ex-

treme cases, go forty-eight hours without drink. This characteristic is also possessed by the sheep in Shakhsewan, in Persia, which winter in the Mugan steppe. Another source of income is the occasional sale of a three-year-old colt to Persians or Arabs who come to the camp for this purpose. The price of colts is high and a Bedouin who has one or more to sell makes enough to carry him through the year. A lucky raid may also enrich an Arab. This last is a risky means of livelihood, depending upon his own skill and the swiftness of his horse, and in cases of failure the Bedouin may lose his all and his life into the bargain. Among hostile tribes sheep lifting is also practised. A band generally creeps up to the flock and falls upon the shepherd, whom they either kill or leave tied up. Then the flock is broken up into several small bunches and driven off in different directions to make pursuit difficult. Another method of sheep lifting is based on the well-known stupidity of sheep, that can be made to follow the object that has frightened them. Several horsemen charge a flock, that immediately bunches together. One of the riders then forces his way into the midst of them, fires his gun into the air and then dashes out and sets off over the plain, all the sheep after him. The other horsemen follow in the rear and on the flanks. When the excitement of the stampede subsides and the sheep begin to weaken in their awkward gallop, the same maneuvre is repeated, and again the sheep run with renewed energy. In this way they can be forced to run many miles at a gait seemingly incredible for sheep. The very same trick is employed by the Turkomans and by the Beluchis, who wander with their flocks up into Khorasan in Persia. But, aside from such comparatively easy ways of driving off flocks, the Bedouins engage in more serious raids, "ghazus," where they have battles on a small scale, which battles are generally remarkable for

A BEDOUIN TENT

the small amount of blood spilled, in spite of much noise. The more serious ghazus are usually brought about by some wrong that has been done by a hostile tribe—the stealing of horses or camels, robbing a night traveller or perhaps carrying off a maiden. In such cases there is an effort made at first to come to a peaceable settlement of the quarrel. An envoy is sent, chosen from the most eloquent and prudent of the tribe. In case of his failure a council is held. The strength of the enemy is considered and weighed against their own fighting contingent. The chances of allied tribes joining to help them is noted. The messengers are sent to such tribes asking for their aid. In the meantime provisions are laid in, arms and saddles are overhauled and horses trained. As has been said, only thoroughbreds are taken, the best mares of the tribe, for as the proverb runs, "Poor horses will in the day of battle ruin their masters." Horses are used only during the actual fighting, the journey being made on camels, the horses being led until the enemy is in sight. Generally only the men go on the ghazu, but occasionally the whole encampment moves. At such times the loaded camels, women and children follow in the rear, protected by riders who also serve as reserves.

Women ride, one or more on a camel, and the richer have "howdahs" or sort of palanquin on the camel's back. This is formed by four upright poles being fastened for an awning to the saddle. These poles and the top are adorned as gaily as possible, and such howdahs are the dream of every desert girl.

But the enemy, too, is not napping. By means of spies and runners they follow each step of the preparations of the opposite party and are seldom caught unprepared. Finally the two opposing parties set out on the march. Scouts ride ahead, then the chief fighting body and finally the women, children and camp, if such accom-

pany the ghazu. As soon as the enemies come in sight of each other, every warrior seizes his lance and, mounting his fresh mare, the parties meet, but the attack does not begin at once. First there is a sort of exhibition of horsemanship, galloping and curveting about, while a steady string of insults to the enemy and praise of his own tribe, heroes and mares, is kept up. Sometimes war songs are sung. This ends by the two groups drawing nearer, and attempts are made, as they pass each other, to unseat the enemy, in which case, by the law of the desert, the riderless horse becomes the property of the victor.

The unseating of the first man serves as a signal for the general attack to begin. The excitement grows as the heat of battle increases. At first the blunt point of the lance is used, the object being to unseat or stun the opponent, but gradually the sharp point comes into play and finally firearms are resorted to. The wounded are carried to the rear, where the women dress the wounds and encourage them to return to the fray. In olden times the fairest maiden in the tribe led the fighting party, seated in a brightly adorned howdah, chanting a battle song. The person of these maidens was always considered inviolable. At the present time this custom has ceased to be followed. Finally, when one of the two parties gives in, or night ends the fight, both sides withdraw to their base. Here the wounded and dead are counted, and the loss of the enemy considered and a balance struck. The side whose loss is heaviest cannot be contented unless the loss is made even, or the enemy consents to pay the difference in "blood money." In the former case a blood feud begins. The family of those killed lie in wait for members of the hostile tribe. Each fresh man killed leads to more bloodshed. If the allied tribes had losses in the original fray, they, too, take part in the blood feud. In

this way an impassable barrier of blood is raised between the tribes that may last for generations. No member of one tribe can pass through the territory occupied by the other without taking his life in his hands, and in this way travelling in the desert is very complicated. It is almost impossible to find a guide who has not a blood feud with some tribe or other, and whose choice of routes must consequently be limited. Often elders of neutral tribes take upon themselves the task of arbitrators. Parleyings begin, that drag through months. All the losses from the beginning are counted. The price of blood, as based on the teachings of the Koran, is estimated, payable in camels or other animals. The sum is approximately $1,500, an enormous sum for a Bedouin to raise. In practice, to make this possible it is the custom to set a much higher nominal price on each animal than the real worth, so that with the sacrifice of fewer camels, the sum named in Holy Tradition may be obtained. Then begins the bargaining and a struggle takes place between the passions of revenge and cupidity. Occasionally, at the last moment, the family exclaims, "We will not drink our brother's blood," and all discussion is at an end and the blood feud goes on. But more often, in the end, the arbitrators succeed in a peaceful termination of the feud and the price of blood is handed over. Generally all the relations and often the entire tribe of the man killed are present at the ceremony of the paying of the blood money. A peace contract is made out and usually vows of friendship are exchanged between the hitherto hostile tribes. "Your enemies shall be our enemies and your friends our friends," is the base of this alliance. To cement still further the friendship, a marriage is arranged between the two tribes. Throughout the Moslem East intermarrying is considered the surest means of uniting two tribes or families after a blood feud. Often the sister of the victim will marry her

brother's slayer. Occasionally, but rarely, the feeling of revenge gets the upper hand at the last moment and the tragedy continues.

European literature has idealised the Bedouin. The poetic subject of the chivalrous, free-born son of the desert is an enticing one. In actual fact the Bedouins stand on a very low plane of culture. What else can be expected of a man whose whole life is passed in the desert, who has almost no religious ideas or beliefs, whose ideals and ambitions rise no higher than the camel and horse? The poets sing of the hospitality of the Bedouin. But this hospitality is the direct result of life in the desert and is reciprocal. If the Bedouin were not hospitable and refused to entertain the stranger, many travellers would certainly perish of hunger and thirst. To each Bedouin there comes a time when he is the traveller and stranger. Hospitality is a custom and its limits are definitely defined. A guest may consider himself in absolute safety so long as he is under the tent of his host, but no longer. And the number of days that a guest has the right to demand hospitality is definitely limited. During this time the guest must put up with the most unceremonious questioning and examination. I have happened to be in camps where for the first time the Arabs saw Muscovites, as they call us. Evidently their idea of Muscovites was as of some mythical being, judging from the surprise evinced when they found that we had two eyes and one nose, in a word, were human beings.

It would be hard to find a people whose life is a series of greater hardships and hunger than the Bedouin. They divide their year into four periods of three months each. Of these, three periods are more or less famine months, and only the one spring period, the "er-rabia," presents to the Arabs a comparatively bearable existence. At this time the desert is covered with juicy grass and the she-

camels, following the plentiful pasture independent of wells, are in milk. Various edible herbs, too, are to be found at this time that break the monotony of the very limited Bedouin menu. The locusts, too, can be expected at this season and the Bedouin eagerly welcomes them, roasting on coals the wings and hind legs. They also lay in large stores of dried locusts for the famine months. Now the Bedouin is, indeed, the lord of the desert, for, owing to the grass, he can roam at will, sure of pasture. It is at this time possible for the Bedouin to move his camp every three or four days, according as the camels need fresh pasture. The time and distance of the march are settled by common consent by the sheikh. The tents or "beyt" (houses) are quickly taken down and loaded on to the camels, this work being done exclusively by the women, it being considered beneath the dignity of the lord of the desert to stoop to such menial labour. The process of moving the camp is called "rahla." The order on the march is invariably the same: the sheikh leads, with the men of the tribe, followed by camels laden with all the simple household goods, on top of which are perched the women and children. Most of the women have boxes, but few own a box with a lock, and those fortunate women who do possess such an article hang the key among the other ornaments that are attached to her head-dress and hang down her back. Sometimes to these ornaments, of which they are very proud, are added a thimble and small pincers which are used to extract thorns from the barefooted family. While on the march the women of various families often mingle and chat as they ride along side by side. This custom is not, however, encouraged by the men folk, who wish the women to save their strength for the hard work of setting up the camp on arriving, and besides, they say that "anyway women cannot talk of anything sensible." During marches made

in the hot season Bedouins always refrain from conversation, as it encourages thirst.

Very young camels and colts are carried in large saddle bags, only the heads and necks sticking out and swaying with the long swinging strides of the camels. The young puppies of greyhounds, which are greatly prized, are carried in the same way. If on the march anyone falls behind, or loses the way, even if it is a child, no one but the immediately interested persons will pay any attention or stop to hunt for the missing one. The sick are carried on a sort of bed arranged on the top of a flat load. Children dying on the march are at once buried by the roadside, the shallow graves often being dug in the sand with tent poles. When an adult dies the body is wrapped in felt and if possible carried to the common burial ground, often at a great distance. Animals falling sick are never killed, as Mohammedans consider this a sin. They are left by the roadside to die miserably of thirst. Occasionally the wretched creatures drag after the caravan as far as the next camping ground, but there the Bedouins do not give them drink, leaving them to suffer until the end mercifully comes. If on a march an oasis is passed or a settlement of fellaheen, a supply of dates is bought for winter use. To avoid extra weight these stores are buried in the sand to be taken up when the tribe returns the same way in the autumn. Such stores are considered as inviolate and no one dreams of stealing them. Sometimes, when pressed, clothing is left on the ground and the owner is reasonably sure of finding it later on.

The choice of a camping ground lies with the sheikh. When he finds a spot that satisfies him he sticks his long spear in the ground, and the head of each family does the same on the spot chosen for his tent. Here the duty of the men ceases. As the caravan comes up, each woman finding her husband's spear, sets to work with the chil-

dren and other women of the family, and in a wonderfully short time the new camp is erected, and life goes on as usual until the new "rahla."

The tents of the Bedouins are woven of camel's hair or of sheep's wool and are exceedingly durable, becoming stronger and lighter with time and lasting for more than a generation. All the wool produced by the Bedouin goes for his own use and is not an item of export. The men's part of the tent has its shady side open, and anyone is at liberty to enter. The women's half is partitioned off, but the richer families have separate tents for the harem.

All the household furnishings of the Bedouin, except the most necessary metal utensils, are home-made. Even their dyes are made by themselves. The bright purple, a very durable dye, is prepared from a certain fungus boiled in camel's urine.

During the spring months when milk is plentiful the women lay in a supply of dried milk, which is one of the staple articles of diet and indeed sometimes the only food during the "hunger months." This dried milk is called "merinie" and under another name is found in Persia, even in towns and villages, for winter use. It is made from curdled milk which is strained, pressed and made into small balls and then dried in the sun. These keep through the months that the camels are not in milk. The dry balls are crushed and stirred in water, thus furnishing a sort of sour milk which is used alone or in cooking any flour or grain they may have.

The close of the spring season marks the end of anything like a bearable existence. The summer, "el-hayt," autumn, "esesfer," and winter, "esh-sheta," may be called famine months, for the Bedouin is never satisfied during this long period. His hardships increase as the dry season advances, until the last months are, as the Arabs say,

"mysil-el-maat," "like unto death." At this season even the rich Bedouin is half hungry, and that the poor survive at all is due to their extraordinary power of endurance. The Bedouin now draws his belt tight, and lying on his stomach to ease the pangs of hunger, sleeps all day waiting for his meagre supper, his one meal at the worst period.

The inhabitants of the desert rise early, before the sun. The women at once prepare their simple breakfast, consisting of milk or curds in the springtime and the rest of the year of dried milk or locusts, or a handful of pressed dates rubbed up in water. Most of the day is spent by the women in sleeping or in sitting in the sheikh's tent, which serves as a kind of club. Here the latest desert news is discussed, quarrels are settled, the various interests of the tribe discussed, etc. To each person half a tiny cup of sugarless coffee is served, two swallows, not more. This coffee is in fact the chief magnet drawing people to the sheikh's tent. In this way the morning is passed until midday, when all scatter for their afternoon nap, to rise an hour before sunset, as it is considered injurious to sleep near sundown. After this siesta the men again betake themselves to the sheikh's tent for the one homeopathic portion of coffee. However poor, the Bedouin has a small provision at least of unburned coffee. Coffee is freshly browned just before using, pounded in a wooden mortar and cooked over the coals. A very small amount of coffee is used, the beans being counted, and the grounds that remain are added to the fresh brew next time. Just before sunset the she-camels are driven in and after giving them an hour's rest the women milk them. Camels are in milk eleven months, but of course the quantity given decreases progressively with the dry season. The mares are tied to the women's tents and the desert rings with the whinnying of both mares and colts in expectation of milk

as the camels are driven up. The camels are milked into large wooden bowls and the mares and colts get their portion first, then the children are fed (from the same unwashed bowl, of course) and the rest goes to the simple supper of the adults and for making curds. As soon as the darkness sets in the men light fires, as the nights are chilly on the Arabian plateau, often 3,000 feet above the sea. The fires are made from brushwood gathered during the day by the women. In getting the fuel the women are careful not to touch anything that the camels can eat. Around these fires the Bedouins sprawl with their heads towards the fire, flat on their stomachs, as said before, to alleviate the ever-present pangs of hunger. Now begins the endless talk of the desert life, stories of ghazus, of ghosts and mysterious unseen inhabitants of the desert. An hour or two is spent in this way, and then each goes to his tent, where the same meagre supper as his morning's breakfast awaits him, and the Bedouin day is over.

At night the Bedouin sleeps little and very lightly, being always on the watch for a night attack. The quiet of the night is only broken by the occasional barking of the hounds if wolves are prowling about. If a sheep is carried off by these marauders, severe as the loss is to the poor Bedouin, he takes it with wonderful philosophy, comforting himself that it was "kismet."

If, as seen above, the male portion of the inhabitants of the desert is hungry, the women fare even worse. The men at least have a few swallows of coffee during the day in the sheikh's tent, or being far away from the camp, sometimes according to desert custom go up to the herds and get a drop of milk. During the famine months the Bedouin eats anything that can possibly be eaten; birds of prey that live on carrion, lizards, foxes' and wolves' flesh. "What we cannot ourselves eat we give to the harem—the harem can eat everything," say the Arabs.

To the suffering that habitually comes to the Bedouin from hunger, taking as he does nourishment in quantities barely sufficient to keep body and soul together, must often be added thirst. During the dry season they depend upon what water there is remaining in wells or hollows. In these places they water their cattle and in spite of the remonstrances of the sheikh perform the ablutions demanded before prayer. The water in the pools becomes therefore so foul that linen washed in it becomes brown. But the Bedouin is thankful for even such water, using it with the greatest economy and refraining from one unnecessary swallow.

They are equally economical in watering their beasts. In the hot season the camels are watered once in three days, sheep and asses every other day and only the horses get two drinks daily. In the autumn and winter months camels are watered once in five days, while sheep and donkeys get water every two days. During the spring months the camels are not watered at all, the juicy pasturage being sufficient. Such training naturally results in the camels being as enduring as their masters, capable of sustaining great fatigue and thirst. A pacing dromedary in good condition can on short distances run 130 versts[1] in twenty-four hours. On journeys of a week it can keep up an average of 90 versts, and for a two weeks' march it has been known to make 80 versts in the twenty-four hours. It is wonderful how the camels can keep up their speed getting only such food as the desert provides during the short hours of rest and receiving water but once in three to four days. During such long marches the hump becomes small and flabby, and there is no doubt that the camel depends on the fat of his hump to give it nourishment.

Considering the life of the Bedouins it is not surprising

[1] 1 verst equals ⅔ of a mile.

GROUP OF BEDOUIN MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN

that there is a great deal of disease of the digestive organs to be found among them. Smallpox and other kindred epidemics create a panic among the simple desert folk so great as to cause them occasionally to abandon their sick. Vaccination is known among the Bedouins and gladly resorted to when opportunity affords. Cholera also often carries off many victims. Although eye diseases are very prevalent, the eyesight of the Bedouin is generally remarkable. "I see Zal," a Bedouin will say, meaning a formless something in the distance, whether bush, rider or beast he cannot yet say, and which a European will only just perceive after half an hour's camel walk. And even then what to the foreigner is a formless object can by the Arab be distinguished as a certain animal, the very colour of which he can give.

The women generally play the part of physician, and strange are the remedies often employed by them. Amulets and charms fill an important place in their pharmacopoeia. Actual cautery is the main remedy, and it is freely used for every imaginable pain or ache, and hardly an Arab can be found who does not bear its marks. The "evil eye" and witchcraft, too, are believed in. When an Arab is dying his friend or near relation begins to sing in a loud voice to frighten away death. If possible the funeral takes place the same day that death occurs. Owing to the absence of spades graves are dug with tent pegs and are therefore very shallow. The day after the funeral a sacrifice, "kurban," is offered. A sheep or a camel, according to the means of the family, is killed and the whole tribe invited to take part in the "kurban" feast. This, however, is not done in the case of a woman's death.

Sacrifices of this kind have a large place in the life of the Bedouins from the rare red-letter days on which they get a full meal. These sacrifices or general feasts take

place on the occasion of the birth of a son, circumcision, or after the successful return from a "ghazu," a marriage, recovery from severe illness, or the arrival of a guest. When a stranger arrives in camp and enters a tent the host asks no questions until he has fed the guest with whatever God has given him, even if it is the last he has.

This is a sacredly observed custom. The Bedouins say, "In this world we are all strangers and travellers, Allah's guests, and if we are not hospitable to others Allah will refuse us his hospitality." This idea is the mainspring of the practical form that hospitality takes in the desert.

Camel's milk is first offered to the weary guest and is called "kheyr Allah," God's gift. In passing I will mention that camel's milk is easily assimilated in the stomach, but gives colic to those unaccustomed to it if taken in considerable quantities. Coffee follows, prepared by the host himself if there is water to be had in the camp. Only half a cup is offered, as it is not considered polite to fill the cup, which would be a hint to the guest that after drinking it he might depart. If the guest arrives in the morning he gets the usual breakfast of sour milk with perhaps the addition of dates in water. When the meal is served the host says, "Eat, and may Allah give you life." The real Bedouin will not rise until all have finished. The guest at the end of the repast generally says, "Umnaat Allah aleika ia myateb" ("May God's blessing rest upon thee, oh my host"). The supper consists of the same food as the breakfast, and if the guest is to leave the next day it is not the custom to feed him in the morning. Sometimes the hostess may give the departing guest just a handful of dates for the road. Hospitality is obligatory for three days. Sometimes a passing stranger may leave some of his belongings with his host, and on his return he is sure of finding everything as he left it.

When an honoured guest arrives his entertainment is the duty of the sheikh, who invites the entire tribe to take

part in the evening's feast, a camel or sheep being slaughtered for the occasion. As soon as the beast is killed and skinned the meat is cut up roughly and thrown into a huge cauldron of water, where it boils without any seasoning. When the meat is sufficiently cooked it is turned out onto large wooden trays and carried into the tent, where all those invited are already assembled. The host makes the guest move with the word "Tafaddaln" (welcome); all sit around and dig into the huge pile, using their fingers instead of knives and forks. In a short time little remains but half-cleaned bones. Women are not present at these feasts and have to content themselves with what is left.

Aside from the duties of hospitality, those of judge lie upon the sheikh. Most crimes are punished by the payment of a certain number of animals. Anyone failing to consent to the decision of the sheikh is expelled from the tribe. Sometimes a case is settled by means of an oath. The most sacred oath is taken over a circle drawn in the ashes of a fire. Inside this circle is drawn a cross. After this oath the case is considered settled.

The Arab women, as in all Mohammedan communities, occupy an inferior position. The number of girls born, so far as can be judged, exceeds that of boys. The birth of a son is an occasion for rejoicing and congratulation. The birth of a girl is not even a subject to be mentioned. The women of the tribe visit the mother and condole with her on such an event, comforting her with the assurance that it is Allah's will and she must bow to the rod of "kismet." A girl is looked upon as a burden, an extra mouth to feed until she can be married off. No wonder then that in the prehistoric days Arabs killed the extra female babies. If a woman bear only girls, or is childless, the husband if poor divorces her, or keeps her if he has means, while adding another wife. A divorced wife leads a miserable life until she marries some inferior person. In case of harsh treatment a wife takes refuge with her

parents or friends and the husband has no right to touch her. The case then has to be settled by emissaries, the guest or a friend being chosen as mediator. Women have even less idea of religion than men and very seldom pray.

The low condition of women in the Islamic countries was based upon what was found in Arabia before the Mohammedan conquest.

The Arabs' estimate of women is clearly to be found in the terms used to describe the sex. Among them are words that later became used in other Eastern tongues spoken by those adopting the Mohammedan religion. As for instance, "saif," weak, "nisa," the forgetful, and for an elderly woman, "a'djuss," characterless, strengthless, incapable. Further, in the very names of women the same idea may be traced. Names are chosen for girls from the vegetable kingdom, qualities or even incidents, as "Selma," peace, "Hamdie," praise, "Kotra," born in the green month, "Vateyna," born in rain, "Yabera," patience, "Umm-es-suf," month of wool, "Fuddja," pleasant, "Howsha," scold.

In all my travels in the Moslem East, among the mountains of Kurdistan, the plains of Persia, along the Afghan frontier, in the steppes of Central Asia, among the Alai Kirghizes, nowhere have I found such a depth of poverty, misery and hardships as I saw among the Bedouins. And yet to them the desert is as dear as are the smiling gardens of Persia to the Persian, or the glorious mountains of Kurdistan and Central Asia to the Kurds and Kirghizes. I have even known cases where the Bedouins had the opportunity of living in easy circumstances in the towns but to whom the "call of the desert" was louder than any bodily comfort, and they returned to their state of chronic hunger and thirst. But they had the priceless gifts of freedom and space.

CHAPTER IX

THE ARAB HORSE IN ITS NATIVE LAND

Horses of Arab Descent in Europe and Asia—Why Arabia Produces The Finest Horses in the World—The Horse's Power of Adapting Itself to its Food—Points of a Bedouin's Horse—Limitation—Impossibility of Buying Thoroughbred Mares—Proverbs—Mares Owned in Shares—The Natural Conditions of a Horse's Life—The Origin of the Arab Horse—Are there Many Thoroughbred Arab Horses in Arabia?—Subdivisions of Breeds—Examples of the Bedouin's Estimation of his Horse's Genealogy—"Shammarie," the Pearl of the Desert—Hunting the Wild Ass—Our Wild Ass in Meshed—Endurance of the Arab Horse—The Bedouin as a Rider—Colour of Horses—Points—Defects—Length of Horse Life—Bedouins' Treatment of the Horse—Our Arab Horses in Bagdad—Hamdanie, Seglawie and Rishan—Personal Observations.

If Arabia may not be termed the home of the Arab horse in the sense of its being the place where the animal lived in its wild state, still it is an undisputed fact that the best races of trotting horses in Europe are of Arabian descent. How the Arab horse came into Europe and how various breeds were developed from it there, is well known to all who are interested in horse breeding. But more than this, the best horses of the East can boast the same origin, thanks to Shah Abbas, who reigned in Persia from 1585 to 1628. By his orders Arab horses were distributed as follows throughout his kingdom, which then extended from the Tigris to India: One stud was established in Kurdistan, one in Shiraz and one in Karabagh, then a Persian province. A fourth was placed in what is at present known as Transcaspia. From these Arabs descended the

breeds now known as Kurdistan, Shiraz, Karabagh and Turkoman.

The natural question that presents itself to one's mind is, Why did Arabia give the best horse to the world? Is it because the climate and other local conditions developed them, or is there some other explanation? The first question has to be answered negatively, as the first conditions of successful horse breeding, good pasture and abundance of water, are lacking in Arabia. Good pasture is to be found in the Yemen and in parts of Arabia occasionally, and then only during the rainy season, which lasts two or three months. During the remaining months of the year the desolate wastes of Arabia are covered with little but the cactus and tamarisks. Of water, except in the regions bordering the Tigris and Euphrates, there is even less to be said. Further, the Arab horse is unacquainted with barley, their universal food in other parts of the East. Camel's milk in the earlier days of their lives, dried locusts, and in the regions bordering the sea, dried fish; a handful of stoned dates now and then,—these represent the main articles of food for the Bedouin and his horse. In the Nefuds, as we have seen, the mares are turned loose in the spring, each colt receiving in addition to its mother's milk that of one she-camel. If the pasture land is not too far distant the mares are driven to the camp in the evening. The camels are then milked and first the colts and afterwards the mares and children are given a drink. If a horse can exist at all under such conditions it is owing to great care and then to its wonderful adaptability to all sorts of diet, including animal food. Before the conquest of Transcaspia the Turkomans on their raids were in the habit of taking with them a supply of mutton fat, which from time to time they gave in small quantities to their horses, on which they made as many as 100 versts in twenty-four hours.

It is just these conditions, seemingly so unsuitable, that created the Arab horse. Forcing the Bedouin to care for his steed above himself, it is the result of careful bringing up, training and skilful selection.

As soon as a colt is born it is turned over to the care of the women. Its ears are tied to make them stand as close together as possible, a mark of beauty according to the Arab idea. Horses bought of Bedouins always have a fine scar at the root of the ears—the trace of the cord tied there when a colt. These scars are often artificially made by the "Jambazes" or horse dealers buying animals for export to India, so as to sell city-bred horses as having been bought of Bedouins.

During the heat of the day the colt is allowed the coolest spot in the tents, where he lies down among the children, thus from earliest days becoming accustomed to human beings, recognising them as his best friends and learning to trust them. It is undoubtedly the foundation of the wonderful docility and gentleness of the Arab breed. When the foal is a month old it is weaned and brought up on camel's milk with occasionally a handful of dates if they are to be had. In the autumn the colts are turned out to get their own food, and to prevent them from straying they are hobbled with iron or rope hobbles; the scars they make, lasting through life, are regarded by the buying public as proofs of a horse's being desert born. The "Jambazes" have a most cruel way of imitating these marks by binding a fresh sheep's intestine round one or both legs just above the hock joint, so that as it dries it shall cut into the flesh. The wound thus made is allowed to heal, leaving a scar covered with white hair that cannot be distinguished from that caused by the hobbles. Not only Indian buyers but even town people in Turkish Arabia are often taken in by the "Jambazes" in this way.

When the colt is two years old he is ridden by children,

and in his third year he is mounted regularly. If the colt does not promise much by the fourth year he is sold, according to the Arab proverb:

"If in the fourth year he does not please, sell him without hesitation."

Thoroughbred mares are never sold under any condition, and instances have been known when five and even ten thousand pounds have been refused. Even such mares as are too old for riding are still kept for breeding purposes.

The Arab's regard for his mare is often expressed in sayings that are short but very much to the point, as for instance:

"The foundation of wealth is a mare: bring forth a mare."

"The greatest blessings are a wise wife and a fruitful mare."

In olden times stealing a mare was punishable by death. Sheikhs own one or more pure-bred mares according to their position and means, but it is often the case that among the less well-to-do people a mare is owned by several, the shares being clearly defined and the division of colts made according to detailed and often complicated laws. Sometimes one family owns "one leg," while a richer man claims "two legs," etc.

This system of owning a mare in shares is found even among sedentary Arabs in Turkish Arabia and sometimes in the city of Bagdad itself, if any one is fortunate enough to get hold of a half-bred mare.

The Arab, who is exceedingly particular as to the purity of his own genealogical tree, is exceedingly careful to hold to the same principle in regard to his horse breeding. As the Arabs themselves are divided into tribes and sub-tribes, the same system is adopted in regard to the strain of their horses' breed. In fact, the breeding is car-

ried on in the same manner as laid down in the Koran for Mohammedan marriages. This is one of the chief factors in giving rise to the high quality of the pure-bred Arab horse.

Finally, the third condition towards the development of the peculiar qualities of the Arabian horses is their life under the open sky, during the hot summer day, during the rainy season, and during winter's icy winds.

These natural conditions are exceedingly important to the well being of the Arab horse. While travelling on the Pamirs we noticed how the stall-fed horses, in spite of the best food, did not pick up as rapidly after the fatigues of the long march as did the Kirgie horses left to shift for themselves on the scant pasturage, often obliged to paw away the snow to get at their food. Stables are the enemy of the Arab horse, and once inside them he quickly loses much of his former qualities, falls an easy prey to colds and skin diseases, and his endurance also becomes in a great measure weakened.

The Bedouin tells the following legend of the creation of the horse:

Before the creation of man Allah created a mare. Causing the south wind to condense he formed from it a bay mare with a white star on her forehead. To this day bay horses with white stars are the most prized in Arabia and in the Sahara.

The Bedouin says that Allah has three great gifts to mankind, "a good horse, a good wife and a good blade."

It is a great mistake, however, to assume that every horse found among the Bedouins is pure bred. A thoroughbred horse is not easy to find in Arabia, the more so that horses are not as plentiful in that country as is generally supposed. The traveller Burckhardt estimated that there were not more than 6,000 to be found in the whole of the Syrian desert. Between Mecca and Medina, a distance

of some 300 miles, the same writer counts not more than 200 horses, while in Nejd he considers that the number would not be above 20,000.

These figures are, of course, very roughly estimated and serve merely as a general basis proving the above statement.

In addition to this must be taken into consideration the fact that far from every Bedouin has a thoroughbred horse. Such are to be found only in the possession of sheikhs and rich Arabs.

Further, not all thoroughbred horses as found among the various tribes are of equal value. Each tribe has its special strain. For instance, in the oasis of El-Hasa are to be found undoubtedly pure-bred horses, but they are far inferior to those bred in Nejd or among the Aenizeh or Shammar tribes. The cause for this is supposed to be the difference in the bringing up of the El-Hasa horses. Here we find fine pasture, but the absence of raids, which develop the endurance of horses, leads to the production of a weak race. From this we can draw the general conclusion that the greater the hardships to which the horse is subjected, making him more dependent on man's help, the better the result. As proving the correctness of this theory we find the best horses come from Nedj, then from the Aenizeh and finally from the Shammar tribe. For this reason if a horse dealer gets an animal from the Shammars he tries to pass it off as an Aenizeh horse, whereas if he gets hold of an Aenizeh-bred horse he calls it Nedj.

Sometimes, however, a first-class animal is found where least expected, and the secret is a lucky ghazu or raid. Sometimes an inferior tribe becomes in this way possessed of a first-class mare, and thus improves the strain of its own horses.

The Arabs trace their pure-blood horses to five mares

owned by the Prophet Mohammed. But there is no doubt that in Mohammed's time these five strains already existed. They are known under the general name of "al hamsa," "the five." From the names of these five mares come the names of the five chief strains of Arab horses, Kehilan, Seglawie, Abeyan, Hamdanie and Hadban, but each of these strains in course of time has given rise to sub-divisions. For instance, the Kehilan has sixty sub-strains, Seglawie nine, Abeyan twelve, Hamdanie two and the Hadban four, and each of these sub-divisions has its own name, probably from a famous mare, the founder of the line.

Here it should be mentioned that the Arabs attach more importance to the mother's side in tracing a pedigree than to that of the sire.

The Arabs estimate so highly the purity of their horses' breed that in this one respect their word can be invariably relied upon. As an instance of this can be cited the case of an Arab who, mortally wounded in a ghazu, called to the victorious party to come back and hear before he died the genealogy of his mare that they had taken. Moreover, when, after a successful ghazu, blood mares have been seized the winning party send an envoy, whose person is scrupulously respected, to ask the original owners to give the pedigree of the mares taken, and this is always most conscientiously done. An instance is told of an Arab who succeeded in stealing a valuable mare at night. The master, aroused, sprang upon another mare and gave chase. The race continued all night and at daybreak the owner overtook the thief to such a degree that he could just touch him with the end of his spear, with the sharp point of which he steadily prodded the thief's back, unable, however, to draw near enough to inflict a serious wound or overpower him. This continued for some time, the unlucky horse thief in the meantime getting more than

one score of good pricks, when suddenly he found himself upon the precipitous banks of a deep dry stream. The horse thief gave an encouraging shout and the gallant mare rose like a bird and cleared the obstacle, whereas the inferior mare on which the owner was giving chase stopped short. Seeing that the game was up he called to the thief to turn and hear the pedigree of the "pearl of the desert" that he had won!

There are mares whose fame has spread throughout the entire desert, who are the pride and wealth of the tribe and for whom the Bedouin would sacrifice himself, his wives and children. There was one such owned by the sheikh of the Shammar tribe, named in honour of the tribe "Shammarie." Of her beauty, swiftness and endurance the whole desert rang. They positively declared that she could alone run down a wild ass. To understand the weight of this statement one must be acquainted with the manner of hunting these animals, whose fleetness and great endurance are proverbial. The wild ass is to be found in Irak, in the Senjar mountains, and along the Perso-Afghan frontier, and I am acquainted with this sport. When a herd of these animals is found a number of horsemen, ten to fifteen, on the best horses to be had, are stationed at certain intervals along the line of retreat that the herd is expected to take. When the drive begins the first horseman follows at full speed to the point where the second man is posted with a fresh horse. In this way often ten or more horses are worn out before one of the young or a mother who will not forsake her colt is run down.

In passing I would touch upon these beautiful creatures. During our sojourn in Meshed a four-months-old wild ass was caught in the above detailed manner and was brought to us. He was kept in the stables with several horses, but all attempts to tame him were useless. He

ARAB HORSEMEN

kicked and bit those who fed him. In the summer we tied him with a long rope on the lawn, hoping to accustom him to us, but as soon as anyone came within range he dashed forward, showing his teeth and, wheeling with the rapidity of lightning, began a volley of kicks that were too fast to be counted. When old enough all efforts were made to mount him, but no one was found who could stick on his back for more than a few seconds. Though this animal is known in Persia as a wild ass, it was found in the Imperial Museum at St. Petersburg, where our specimen is now to be seen stuffed, that they are erroneously so termed, being in fact wild horses. These so-called wild asses are sometimes kept in the gardens of Meshed as watch dogs, and well do they perform their duties. The she-asses are more gentle and are often taught to bear handling and even sometimes the saddle. The flesh of the young asses resembles venison and it is considered a dainty by the Bedouins.

If, then, that famous mare "Shammarie" alone ran down a wild ass no more need be said.

The first consideration in training a horse is to develop the powers of endurance, and with this in view the Bedouins take their three-year-old colts on hunting expeditions. Instances have been known when Bedouins have made as many as four hundred miles on their mares in five days and nights, with scant food and drink. The real Bedouin takes his horses only on ghazus or the chase. All journeyings are done exclusively on camels. In riding the Bedouin never spares himself nor his steed, quoting the saying that "the horseman's grave is ever open."

The next care is to develop a fast walk. This achieved, all the rest, they say, will follow. Quickness in turning, which is so necessary when on ghazus, is highly valued.

The Bedouin has a loose seat and leans forward. He rides on a sort of pad, without stirrups, and the girth is

never tightly strapped. Bits and bridles are very seldom used, the Bedouin preferring a halter, generally with a single rope on one side of the neck only, and guides his horse with a short stick or wand called "meshab" or "mikdjan" and which he always has with him. The horse is guided by gently touching him on one side of the neck or the other with this stick. Sometimes one meets with spurs strapped on to the bare foot. With the exception of the months when the horses are turned out to pasture one never sees them without a saddle or pad on their back, as is the case with the Turkoman horses in Transcaspia; the difference being that over the saddle the Turkomans cover the horse from shoulder to tail with a heavy felt, however hot the sun may be.

Loving and prizing the horse as the Arab does, a special terminology more rich than in any other language has been developed to describe them.

It is sufficient to cite such instances as a special name for a horse having a star, or for one having a star and one white fetlock or two white legs, etc. Great attention is paid to the colour and even shading of a horse, certain qualities being claimed as depending upon colour. For instance, a bay is considered the most enduring; chestnut, light in movements; white, the royal colour but impatient of the sun's rays. Various shades of grey are not bad, black not to be depended upon on stony ground, and cream and especially parti-coloured are despised. According to these theories such selections are made in breeding that black horses are very seldom met with, dun and cream-coloured still more rarely, and as for a parti-coloured horse, I never saw one in Turkish Arabia. Markings are divided into lucky and unlucky. A star on the forehead, for instance, is deemed lucky, the same with a white face if regular in outline. If a horse has three white fetlocks, and one of the right legs front or back is normal.

it is considered a good sign, whereas if only the two fore-legs are white or the one right leg, it is looked upon as unlucky. If, on the other hand, the right fore and left back legs are white it is again a good sign. All four white legs are disliked.

Whorls or curly places in the hair are considered lucky or unlucky according to the part of the body upon which they are found. If on the breast, between the ears or on the hips, they are said to be lucky, whereas if the curly spots are over the eyes, on the cheeks or near the tail they are considered unlucky.

The Arabs consider as defects in a horse a narrow chest, over-large ears, and a low setting of the tail. As to age, the Arab divides his horse's life into three periods, which he characterises thus:

"Seba'-li-kruya,
Seba'-au-liza,
Seba'-li-adviza."

Roughly translated, seven years for my brother (to ride), seven years for myself, seven years for my enemies. Bedouins are always gentle and patient with their horses and never treat them roughly or beat them. This is proved by the absolutely fearless, confiding manner in which the Arab horses allow man to approach them. As their proverb says, "The rider trains his horse as a husband does his wife." The first care of a Bedouin, even before his own ease, is his horse, and there is a saying in the desert that "work that does not belittle a man is for his horse, for his brother and for his guest." In return the horse serves his Bedouin master with his whole heart, though spirited always docile, ready to work as long as there is any strength left in him, loving his master and recognising him out of many.

In passing I will notice that the Arab views in regard to the colour and marking of horses have passed into Persia. Black horses are considered inferior and the same views are held in regard to white markings. In respect to the latter there is a strange theory. Such horses the Persian avoids, saying they bring misfortune in family life in the form of unfaithfulness in the wife.

From Arabia horses have for many years been transported into India and Egypt. This lucrative profession is in the hands of Arabs or Persians of the Gulf. In selecting horses for the Indian market the Jambazes, as the dealers are called, pay little attention to breed or qualities, counting on every "Gulf Arab" bringing them from 90 to 100 pounds sterling.

Many are the tricks to which they resort trying to pass their horses off as thoroughbreds. The horse market in Bombay during the season when horses are brought down the Gulf is an interesting spectacle, and it is seldom that any valuable piece of horse flesh is found, but if any such is to be had exorbitant prices are asked.

In spite of their often inferior quality these Arabs have secured a reputation among horse owners, and one meets them everywhere as riding horses and polo ponies. Only of late years are horses being brought from Australia to dispute the field with the Arabs.

The principal ports from which Arab horses are exported are Bagdad, Koweyt and Bassorah. Koweyt is the chief port for the central Arabian market, as from there Nedj is only nine days' march through the desert. Bagdad is the point for Irak and Shammar horses. The horses are taken down the Gulf on "British India" steamers. They are placed in rows on deck, standing very closely together so that in rough weather they keep each other up, and for many days at a time they are not allowed to lie down. The owner constantly walks up and down the

ranks stick in hand to see that none of the unfortunate animals lie down in rough weather. Their suffering is often very great, and I myself have seen groups of horses in the Bombay market fresh from the steamer with all four legs swollen to a shapeless mass. The buyers, accustomed to this, do not seem to pay any attention to the temporary disfigurement. In this way as many as 3,000 horses are shipped annually from the Persian Gulf ports. The export of mares is forbidden by the Turkish Government.

In conclusion I will speak of my own observations of Arab horses.

During our stay at Bagdad we had three Arab stallions, one dappled grey, about thirteen hands, a Seglawie. This was a strong, high-spirited, gentle horse bought of a town Arab for $250.[1] There is nothing special to be said about him. He was always a conscientious worker, courageous as a hunter, and during long marches never showed signs of weariness. The second, Hamdanie, my wife's horse, was remarkable for his size, being over fourteen hands, which is rare among Arab horses. He was a dark golden chestnut that in the rays of the sun reflected all the colours of a pigeon's breast. By an unusual stroke of luck I bought him as a four-year-old from a pasha's widow for $400, and, by the way, five years later sold him for a little over that sum. Though so young he was thoroughly broken. His former master obtained him during an expedition in the desert and at the roots of his ears remained the marks of the string with which as a colt they had been tied and on his feet were the scars of the Arab hobbles. While being a remarkably spirited animal he was docile and obedient to the degree of being sensitive to the slightest motion of his rider, with whom he seemed to be one, whose wishes he would seem to anticipate. See-

[1] From the date of which I am speaking the price of horses has risen 35 to 40 per cent.

ing him snort and prance with raised flowing tail and dilated pink nostrils it would seem that he would be a dangerous or a difficult horse to ride. But without a moment's hesitation I should have allowed a six-year-old child to mount him, being certain that not only would Hamdanie never throw the child but would at once modify his paces. He understood perfectly his rider. Once I allowed one of my men, a heavy 200-pound Turk who assured me he was a fine rider, to mount Hamdanie. All went well until we were outside the town—in the desert I heard a heavy thud behind me and on looking around I saw the Turk lying on the ground while Hamdanie stood snuffing him with astonishment. The crestfallen man arose, brushed off the dust, muttering something about "kismet," and tried not to see the ill-suppressed smiles of all around him.

Hamdanie's tail and mane were thin but as soft as silk. When in motion he held his tail high and every hair seemed to spread out, giving the impression of a heavy flowing tail. This he held so high that often in flourishing his tail it lightly struck the rider's back. His head was thin, with long, beautifully pointed ears set closely together. His eyes were very large and full, the hair under them being so thin that the black skin could be seen. His legs and hoofs were faultless and his skin so fine that every vein could be seen through the satin-like coat. His walk was unusually fast, and on the march when riding at the head of the caravan—for Hamdanie would never be second—I was constantly obliged to check him, as none of the others, not excepting Seglawie, could keep up unless by trotting. During all the years we had him I struck him but once, and then I repented. He immediately seemed to shrink together, his head and tail, that he always carried so high, dropped, and he showed such clear evidence of hurt pride that I was filled with

sorrow for him and shame for myself. He always kept in touch with his rider, as one could see by his holding one ear slightly back, especially if going fast, to catch the faintest movement of his rider. I shall give the following illustrations of his intelligence.

I was once going out shooting in February. The Tigris was at full flood, its muddy waters fairly foaming and boiling as they swept along with a speed of fully eight miles an hour. We had to cross the pontoon bridge of which I have spoken before. The part of the bridge that opened to permit of vessels passing was arranged in the most primitive manner. Two broad boards were thrown across the two separate halves of the bridge, and bolted in place. When a high-masted boat passed these bolts were withdrawn, the boards removed and the bridge was open.

I was accompanied by a number of men and was riding as usual in the front of the company on Hamdanie, who under the influence of the spring was even more full of life than usual, prancing from one side of the road to the other, snorting and spreading out his tail. Every party of Arabs that we passed, horse lovers that they are, followed him with admiring eyes, exclaiming, "Mash Allah!" As we began to cross the bridge and came to the dividing part I noticed that the bolts were not in place, the boards lying loosely and not even closely together, but some five or six inches apart. My impulse was to stop and have the boards properly fastened, but a false sense of shame at expressing what would seem like timidity kept me silent. Just at that moment a guffa passed rapidly under the bridge and someone in it shouted, startling Hamdanie, who started slightly, and before I realised what had happened one foot and then the whole body went down between the boards. In a second almost unconsciously the instinct of self-preservation caused me to give a desperate bound

over the horse's head and on to the main part of the bridge, while poor Hamdanie stuck between the boards, that fortunately were kept by a little unevenness from separating further, while he was held up by the flaps of my English military saddle, with his legs hanging over the foaming torrent. Had he struggled he surely would have fallen through. In less time than it takes to tell a crowd had gathered, and, as is usual with a crowd, each one was shouting advice and instructions, but doing nothing. My own men were on the other side and feared to cross over. Some one gave me a rope and at considerable risk I got over to where the poor beast was, and fastening it firmly round his neck again crossed over to the main bridge, not knowing what to do next. Had it been later in the season the simplest way would have been to remove the boards and let the horse drop into the water, trusting to his swimming safely to shore, but with such a flood it was out of the question. In the meantime the shouting crowd increased, my own men had disappeared, and I was left holding the rope, and a few feet from me Hamdanie hanging, never moving a muscle but with his eyes fixed on me with what seemed to me an imploring look. At last I saw my men floating down in a guffa, carrying long poles in their hands. Everyone at once understood their idea. Several hands seized hold of the rope I had fastened round Hamdanie's neck, and others ventured to get hold of the flaps of the saddle, and all pulled together as the men from below pushed the horse upwards with their poles. At the risk of strangling him all pulled and finally got the miserable creature half over one of the boards. Even here had he struggled we should have lost him, but in spite of what must have been excruciating pain the intelligent animal never moved. As soon as he was pushed well on to the boards he carefully rose and with a whinny shook himself; but what a sight our beautiful horse was!

EUROPEAN CHILDREN RIDING IN BOXES ON
DONKEY BACK IN PERSIA

The torn and lacerated flesh hung in strips and streams of blood trickled down his legs. The tender, shining coat was nearly scraped off his belly and the under sides of his legs by the cruel poles with which they had hoisted him from below. A hasty examination, however, convinced us that he was not otherwise seriously injured, and we led him home. He was laid up for a long time and was so swollen and stiff that he could not lie down and we had to arrange to sling him. During this time he was as patient and as thankful for treatment and kindness as a human being could be, and when in great pain would seem to be consoled with his beautiful head laid on his mistress's shoulder while she soothed and patted him.

Another time when he showed an almost human understanding my wife was riding him.

Returning from a ride one evening as we entered the town we had to pass through an archway and then turn sharply into a narrow lane. Just as we entered the arch, my wife leading the party, a large band of children came racing down the lane, and one after the other on turning the corner ran into Hamdanie, who was cantering and as usual prancing. I turned cold with horror as I foresaw the awful accident that seemed unavoidable. The wise creature understood the danger as well as I did, and in a second stopped short and threw himself back, sitting literally like a dog on his haunches with forelegs well spread, receiving one after another the children, who ran full into his arms as it were. Hard as the position was for horse and rider, he kept it up until the last child had run round the corner into him. The little ones picked themselves up, quite unconscious of the fate the horse's kindness had spared them. Hamdanie was the universal favourite. No one who knew him could pass the stables without stopping to pat him or feed him with dates, of which he was very fond. It was a pretty sight to watch

him tease his groom when the man was cleaning the stables. With his teeth he would slyly undo the man's belt, extract his handkerchief from the capacious Arab pocket or take off his groom's hat, holding it in his teeth high up almost out of reach.

I remember the horror and indignation of our groom when one day, crossing the Euphrates, I thoughtlessly handed Hamdanie's bridle to an Arab who happened to be there and offered his services. Like a lion the groom pounced upon the unoffending Arab and snatched away the bridle. "One cannot give such a horse to the care of a stranger," he panted, looking at me with flashing eyes. "He might spring onto his back and then the wind even would never catch Hamdanie."

My third pure-blooded horse was a Rishan, eight years old, not quite thirteen hands high, grey with pinkish dapples, which is much admired by the Arabs.

The history of how he came into my possession and of how I worked to get rid of him is worth telling.

Among my acquaintances was a pasha of Circassian origin whose official duties often caused him to make expeditions into the desert, when he was occasionally able in one way or another to get hold of thoroughbred horses. Among these horses was Rishan. We often met the pasha in our rides, on Rishan, when he generally joined our party. Being a fine rider, the pasha often rode Rishan in the Arab way without a bit, guiding him with one rope and his "meshab." This made the greater impression as Rishan was an uncommonly hot-headed horse, and the onlookers always felt that the pasha was risking his life riding that way in a city. I have never before nor since seen such a typically graceful and beautiful horse. His small lean head, full eyes, small pointed ears, silken tail flowing when the horse was in motion, delicate dark skin through which every vein and muscle could be traced,

clean, fine legs—all spoke of blood. Several months passed, when I learned through a mutual friend that the pasha would not be averse to selling Rishan for $450. But as he was a proud Circassian pasha, he considered it beneath his dignity to go through the sordid details of bargaining and selling, and I had to play a comedy in which there were two leading figures.

The comedy was as follows: One day while calling on the pasha, Rishan was led into the courtyard, and on my warmly expressing my admiration, the pasha, as soon as I left, ordered him to be sent to my house.

Two days later I called again with a little silk bag in which were £90. During the call I asked to see his son, a bright little fellow of seven, to whom as a present I gave the bag containing the price of Rishan.

I confess that the first time I mounted Rishan I was not sure of myself. Two grooms held him and he impatiently pawed the ground with his tiny hoofs, but the moment I was fairly in the saddle he was all gentleness and obedience; an imperceptible motion of the reins was all he needed, though he was snorting and fuming and covering me with flecks of foam. The more I rode him the more I liked him.

It is true I had no occasion of trying him on the march, but for pleasure rides I could not wish for anything better. All my friends congratulated me and I was very proud of my new possession until one, to me, memorable day, when a number of us went for a ride in the desert. Some one asked me to show off his paces, and all coming to a halt I turned to go off the beaten track. To my surprise the gentle Rishan gave an ugly toss of his head and began to gnaw the bit. I touched him lightly with the spur and the next moment he was standing straight up on his hind legs and stayed there so long that it seemed as if he must fall backwards. I slipped off his croup to

the ground, still holding the bridle, and he then came down to his normal four legs. One of my men, an Arab, mounted Rishan, and on attempting to turn him aside from the company the horse repeated the same performance. We had to give in, and remounting Rishan, and keeping with the other horses, he was the same gentle animal we had known. My man, no less mystified than I with this new freak, undertook next day to come to an understanding with the horse, and he soon found the secret of his gentleness came in keeping with the party or letting him take the lead. The moment he was crossed or turned away from his fellows he became another being. A Bedouin horse breaker was then sent for, who at the first sight of Rishan recognised him and flatly refused to ride him. The man told us Rishan's pedigree and said that he had killed two owners and was well known for his vice. He added that had it not been for this defect the horse would have been priceless. We decided to get rid of such an animal. It was autumn and the horse dealers from India were then buying up horses, and we easily found a man who consented to sign a paper saying that he bought the horse for half the price I had paid for him, as he was fully aware of Rishan's dangerous qualities. My only stipulation was that the Jambaz himself should take Rishan out of the stable, for since we had ceased riding him he had become very ugly, biting and kicking even his groom, so that finally food and water had to be pushed towards him. We all went out to see Rishan the day he was taken away. Several men with difficulty had run him out for the Jambaz to mount. Once out of our gate a difference of opinion as to the direction to be taken arose between Rishan and his rider. The Jambaz insisted upon going where he wished, but Rishan had his revenge, for he went prancing along so close to the walls that he literally skinned the thinly clad Arab's side!

Just before they sailed I went to see my Rishan and hardly recognised him in the thin, half-starved horse they showed me. It seemed that to tame him for the long voyage the Jambaz had given him just enough food and drink to keep him alive. When I asked the new owner if he thought the poor fellow would survive such treatment he replied, "In-sha'allah, "if it be God's will." Of Rishan's further fate I only know that he was sold to an Englishman in India for 400 pounds sterling, and for years whenever we read in the Indian paper of an accident in which a grey horse figured we wondered if it were not our Rishan.

In justice to Arab horses I must say that such vicious specimens are very rare, and during my five years' stay in Turkish Arabia I never even heard of another Arab that possessed such vice, and I always attributed Rishan's temper to some harshness he must have met with in his youth.

CHAPTER X

FROM BAGDAD TO BASSORAH

"Califah"—Bagdad Filters and Water Coolers—Ruins of Ctesiphon and Seleucia—Suleiman Pak—Kut-el-Amara—The Shatt-el-Hai Canal—Lions in Mesopotamia and Persia—How Persians and Arabs Meet Lions—An Unexpected Lion Hunt—Sand Storms—Kurna—Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil—Tomb of Ezra—Palm Groves—Importance of Palm Tree—Palm Cultivation—Artificial Fertilisation—Varieties of Dates.

WE were on the little river steamer "Califah" belonging to the English Company Lynch on our way down to Bassorah. From the latter place we intended taking an ocean liner to Muscat.

The "Califah" was a comfortable little steamer built for a shallow stream and having its sides not more than a foot and a half from the water. There were several roomy, comfortable cabins for first-class passengers, and the stout, good-natured English captain did all he could for the comfort and entertainment of his passengers. There were only a few in the first class, and these were of various nationalities—two Englishmen, a German, a Frenchman, my wife and I. All these passengers were acquaintances, and, having on board our Goanese Mendoza and Fernando, we felt quite at home. As the time was October, low water, the 500 miles as the crow flies could hardly be made under four days, whereas at the season of full water it takes not more than tweny-four hours to go down to Bassorah. Most of the day was spent on deck

under the awning, as even in October the cabins were too warm. Near us on the deck stood two huge native filters, and water coolers, in one. Better filters than these I have never seen; they are primitive in the extreme and are to be found in every house, however poor. They are large egg-shaped jars made of porous clay and stand in a wooden four-legged frame in such a way as to have the bottom a foot off the floor. The water filters through the thick porous bottom into another receptacle placed beneath. The water in the Tigris river is a *café au lait* colour, yet when it comes out of these filters it is the most delicious sparkling drink, as clear as the best spring water. From the same clay as the filters water jars are made, that are to be found all over the East and are the greatest boons in these hot lands. On the hottest day a water jug of this kind placed in a draught becomes so cool as to seem cold, and on our steamer these filters were placed where they could catch the wind.

Owing to the low water the steamer glided between high banks as if at the bottom of a huge canal. In the bow an Arab stood, monotonously calling the depth of the water, as they do on the Volga steamers at the same season. In the springtime the sail down the river is quite different. Then the Tigris overflows its banks and sometimes it seems as if we were in a lake. Only by the colour of the water and the swiftness of the current can the actual river stream be followed. Then, too, it is more interesting, as we can see over the vast flat plain covered with grass and flocks and herds and sometimes tents.

In general the scenery is monotonous: a strip of palm groves where a village is approached; at other times flat plain, with grass or low bushes, and in the early spring Arab encampments.

The flooding of the Tigris brings down magnificent fertilisation to the soil along the river's edge, but irriga-

tion is needed to save it from becoming the desert that surrounds us.

From a historical point of view the trip from Bagdad to Bassorah is full of interest, taking us, as it does, through scenes of the most remote antiquity. The mounds, apparently small natural hills, that one sees at every turn, are all silent witnesses of flourishing cities that once rose there.

Thirty-five miles from Bagdad we passed the mouth of a small tributary of the Tigris, the Diala, along which are fertile gardens. Almost hidden by the trees is the town of Bacuba, the administrative centre of the district of the same name, and near by are yet unexplored ruins of ancient Bagdad.

Diala is a small district of only about 200,000 inhabitants, but owing to the rivers and well-organised irrigation it is noted for its productiveness. Two crops are raised annually: the autumn one of wheat, oats and other grain, and the summer crop of cotton, rice, tobacco, etc. The date palms are also plentiful.

As we advance, the Tigris becomes more and more winding. In some places the stream makes long turns around a point, like a bow, and one can often walk across in half an hour to a point that it will take two or three hours for the steamer to reach. In such a position are to be found the ruins of Ctesiphon. My wife and I wishing to visit this famous ruin, the captain kindly stopped the steamer and let us off. The ground was covered with a low undergrowth of bushes, and in the open places the soil was cracked from the sun in deep fissures of fantastic shape, as if it were one of the sawed puzzles for children. In the spring the shooting here is of wonderful variety. Once in going along a similar neck of land in the spring without a dog, we raised over twenty duradji in less than an hour's time, saw a hyena, a wild cat, and in the deep

bushes my wife stumbled over an object which proved to be a wild boar, very much disconcerted at having his nap disturbed. His feelings were still more upset by the tickling of a discharge of shot that I sent after him, all I had, as we had not expected anything larger than duradji. Of all the animals of the desert the hyena is the most repulsive. Everything about it inspires disgust: its ungainly gait, its coarse bristly hair, its colour, its voice, reminding one of the wild laugh of the insane, and finally the fact of its feeding mostly on the carcasses of the dead. Stories of hyenas disturbing graves are authentic. In Persia I have seen graves torn up by these monsters, who often turn over large stones that are placed as protections against the hyenas. In many parts of Persia a fire is kept burning several nights after a burial, to frighten them off, for some unclean instinct teaches the hyena when a fresh corpse is laid in the ground. It is not often that a grave is disturbed after the first few days or weeks.

But to return to the ruins of Ctesiphon, the ancient capital of the Parthian kings. Of the city nothing remains but a cluster of mounds, but there is one object that distinguishes this ruin from the monotony of the mounds that are all one generally sees. This is the arch of the famous Audience Hall of Chosroes the last of the Sassanian kings.

This gigantic arch rises 80 feet in height and leads into the remains of the throne hall, which is even now 148 feet in depth. On either side of this huge chamber are the remains of many smaller rooms. The walls are of brick strengthened from time to time by layers of wood, of cedar brought from Lebanon. It was our good fortune to secure a detached bit of this cedar over a foot long, that time had rendered almost as hard as iron and that bears no sign of decay. The façade of all that remains of the building is 270 feet long. The width of the arch

itself is 76 feet, and the thickness of the walls of the façade of the building is 18 feet. When Ctesiphon fell into the hands of the Arab conquerors, they found the great throne of Chosroes, the great Sassanian king, whose valour is chanted so beautifully by Firdusi in his immortal "Shah-Namah"—also, it is said, his belt and banner.

There is no other arch known that can compare with that of Ctesiphon in its vastness, boldness of conception and its strength. In spite of the ravages of time and various acts of vandalism it stands yet, a silent but mighty witness of a vanished people and civilisation, that have fulfilled their mission and given way to those of other ages that must in turn meet with the same fate.

Ctesiphon did not escape the miseries that came to all the cities of what is now known as Irak. Founded in 32 B.C. as the capital of the Parthian kings, it was in 116 A.D. taken by the Roman Emperor Trajan. In 119 it was taken by the Emperor Septimius Severus, and in 263 Odenathus, the husband of Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra, laid siege to it. Later, during the reign of the Sassanian kings, in 362, the Emperor Julian defeated the Persians under its walls. Finally, the last of the Sassanian dynasty, Yezdigerd, surrendered Ctesiphon to the Arabs in 637.

Opposite to Ctesiphon, on the left bank of the Tigris, is a shapeless mass of mounds marking the site of another once famous city. Seleucia, built between B.C. 312 and 302, was named for its founder Seleucus, the Syrian king. The fate of this city was even sadder than that of Ctesiphon. Both fell into the hands of Trajan at the same time, but Seleucia was burned to the ground by its conqueror, owing to its having revolted.

Ten years later, having voluntarily surrendered to the Romans, it was burned by Aridius Cassius on a charge of treachery. It was retaken by Severus in 198 A.D. and again by Carus in 283, and when Julian invaded Mesopo-

TIGRIS—ENGLISH STEAMERS RUNNING BETWEEN BAGDAD AND BASSORAH

tamia, all he found of Seleucia was a heap of ruins. It is not surprising, therefore, that there is nothing to be found here except shapeless mounds. Lower down along the banks of the Tigris are many other groups of mounds where once were flourishing cities, but these become rarer as we go farther south.

After dinner we all sat in our deck chairs under the bright stars, listening to the captain's reminiscences of the twenty-odd years he had plied up and down the Tigris. Looking at the flat, monotonous banks of the river, one would not think there would be much of interest to tell of the years spent there, and yet, though I made the trip several times, I myself can testify to some interesting episode on each voyage. This very day, for instance, a most curious incident had broken the monotony and given food for much discussion as we sat together in the evening. Passing a long sandy point of land we had, from a distance, noticed a silvery object flapping and jumping about. As we drew near we could see that it was a large fish stranded on the shore. A boat was at once lowered, manned and sent off to investigate. It soon returned, bringing the fish, and to our amazement we saw sticking out of its mouth another half-swallowed fish, naturally of very much smaller size. Evidently this cannibal fish, in its endeavours to swallow its victim, had found the morsel too big and in its frantic efforts to get its prey either up or down, had thrown itself bodily out of the water, thereby getting itself into fresh trouble. Both fish were prepared for dinner, the smaller of the two being, by common consent, pronounced to be the better, proving the good taste of the cannibal.

The same day we passed the tomb of "Suleiman Pak" (Solomon the Pure), the barber of the Prophet, of whom many legends are told. This tomb is an object of pilgrimage for all sects of Mohammedans, and many

are the stories of miraculous cures that you may hear told by the deck passengers on the steamer. The days passed peacefully and pleasantly on this little journey, as each found something of interest to do and the captain had quite a library of English fiction.

We passed Kut-el-Amara, founded in 1860 as a terminus for the caravans from the interior. From here begins the Shatt-el-Hai canal, all along the banks of which are rich date-palm groves and strips of cultivated ground. On this canal, but nearer the Euphrates, are the remains of several ancient cities of Chaldea, among them that of Tel Lokh (Sirtella), brought to light by the excavations of the former French consul De Sarce. At Kut-el-Amara we let fly the first of three carrier pigeons given to the captain by the English consul as an experiment.

It is nearly certain that the home of the carrier pigeon is Mesopotamia, where this means of communication was known in the most ancient times; indeed, it is only since the establishment of telegraph lines that the custom has been given up by merchants. Caravans starting from Damascus or Aleppo would have several of these birds given to the caravan bashi, who would let them loose at various stages to give news of the progress and finally of the safe arrival of the caravan. Even now one can see flocks of pigeons of this breed in a wild state, but with the homing instinct strongly developed, as proved by such experiments as our captain made. These pigeons are called "Hamam-el-batak," and they made the distance between Bagdad and Bassorah in a few hours.

The captain told us the details of a most extraordinary lion hunt, of which we had heard a great deal from other witnesses of the same almost incredible scene. In passing I must mention that right up to 25 years previous to the date of my story, lions had been abundant in Mesopotamia; the last years, however, they had been exceed-

ingly scarce. In all my journeying I had never had the good fortune of seeing one. Only once, before daybreak, I heard the roars of this king of beasts. I shall never forget the thrill caused by that mighty sound breaking the silence of the desert. My colleague, the United States consul, had the luck while we were in Bagdad, when riding early one morning, to see a lion sitting quietly in the desert, at no great distance. Man and beast gazed at each other with mutual curiosity and probably awe, and then each peacefully continued his own way. In the last years of the eighteenth century lions were very numerous along the lower part of the Euphrates basin, occupied by the Arab tribe of Muntifek. It is said that the daughters of the sheikhs of this tribe never smiled upon their suitors until one had killed his lion. The means employed were primitive though often successful. The lion hunter armed himself with only a sharp curved dagger, an iron peg sharpened at both ends and a long strip of undressed leather. The leather he carefully bound about the left arm from wrist to shoulder, and carried the peg in the same hand, while in the right he held the dagger. On finding the lion he proceeded to tease and excite the beast, until the enraged lion made his rush with open mouth, which the Arab braced himself to meet. Putting forward the left arm he fearlessly ran it down the great open mouth and with the two-pointed iron tore and cut the throat while with the dagger he ripped open the creature's belly. This method of hunting lions is to be found portrayed on many bas-reliefs. Even to this day a half-naked Arab will fearlessly face a lion in the same way, pouring out a torrent of abuse and shouting, "Who art thou, thou night thief, thou bastard who knows not the name of thy father, how darest thou to defile with thy touch, me, the son of so and so [giving his genealogy], of such and such a famous tribe!"

The Persians have another method of attacking lions. In the province of Shiraz and near Shustan and Dezful, not far from the region where Daniel was thrown into the lions' den, these beasts are still to be found occasionally.

According to Persian belief the lion is the only animal who accepts Allah and Ali, the greatest of the Shiite imams. Even in the roaring of the lion they claim that the name of Ali can be distinguished in the sound "iea-Ali." Therefore on meeting a lion the Persian, fully aware of his danger, begins to flatter his adversary, saying in his most conciliatory tone, "O king of beasts, thou art a true believer like me. Do not touch me, for the sake of Allah and of Ali; for the sake of my children and thy children let me go in peace," etc., etc. The result of the hunt is the same in each case, but the method is significant of the characteristics of the two nations.

And so we asked the captain to tell us how he was an unwilling participator in a lion hunt on board his own steamer in 1887. "Well, gentlemen," he said, "it was such an unheard-of experience that were it not well known to all in Bagdad I should hesitate to tell it. We were making our usual trip to Bassorah. It was in March and full water. That year the over-flooding of the Tigris was greater than usual, the water spreading on both sides of the bank often as far as we could see. In this sea of muddy water only occasional islands were to be seen, formed by mounds or long crests marking the thrown-up sides of old canals. The current was so strong that with full steam I worked my way up very slowly, hugging the banks to keep out of the main current. Suddenly from the deck came the cry of 'Lions!' and going up I saw in front of us on one of those small 'islands' two lion cubs. We always have on board a small supply of firearms and ammunition. These were quickly taken out and a lively

firing began from the deck of the steamer, and both cubs were soon killed. A boat was lowered to secure our prizes. I was on the upper deck and in full view of what followed. As I said, the current was strong, and the boat with our sportsmen and their rifles had tough work getting up to the island. Just as the boat was about to touch the shore a lioness appeared above the crest on the mainland, and she was also shot by someone in the boat. In another instant the head of a huge lion appeared, and to our consternation he dashed into the water and struck out for the boat. For a few seconds disorder reigned, for the last shot had been fired at the lioness, but the next moment, recovering their presence of mind, the men bent to their oars, pulling back to the steamer as fast as they could, with the current now in their favour—but also in favour of the lion! From the steamer as many shots were fired as could be without risk of hitting the boat. In the meantime there was an awful panic on board. The steamer, as you see, sits so low in the water that it would be nothing for the lion to scramble on board. The cabin room is very limited and the deck passengers as usual numbered many score. Women and children began to wail and the calmer ones attempted to build barricades and arm themselves with iron pots and other utensils that they had with them. I slowed down and steered towards the boat as it came alongside. We had just time to pull all the men on board when the lion too came up alongside! The panic by this time was indescribable. While we were busy getting the men and their rifles in from the boat the lion succeeded in getting his paws onto the steamer, and kept his hold, although I had at once ordered full speed. The ammunition was quite exhausted, and until more could be brought up from the stores below the firearms were useless; and how it might have ended I do not like to think, had not the Arab pilot secured

an axe with which he chopped off the lion's paws! The huge beast dropped into the river, where he was soon shot by those who had by this time loaded their rifles. The steamer was then stopped and the boat again went out to bring in our trophies, and the skin of the lion was presented to me by the passengers. You have seen it at my house." This thrilling story gave rise to others, and I remembered the experience of an acquaintance of mine, an Englishman, Colonel S.——, inspector of the Indo-European Telegraph Company in Persia. It was in the early seventies. One morning two marches out from Shiraz the colonel was riding slowly along in the rear of his caravan. Without other warning he suddenly felt his horse sink on its haunches as if under a great weight. On turning he saw over his shoulder the head of a lion, whose teeth and claws were buried in the horse's croup! Not losing his presence of mind, the colonel seized a revolver from its holster and planting it against the lion's ear killed it on the spot.

One of the most common scenes that enliven the voyage are the numerous herds of wild boar that gallop along the bank of the river parallel with the steamer as if enjoying the sport of racing us. Often they are so near that a shot from the steamer would be easy enough, but as the deck passengers are mostly Mohammedans, to whom bringing on board the unclean swine would be obnoxious, the captain forbids all such sport. One day we saw a very unusual sight. One of the pigs, tired, possibly, of the tame sport of running along the bank, suddenly plunged into the river and swam across right in front of the bow of our steamer and so close that a shot would have been sure. These awkward creatures seem ill fitted for swimming, but this fellow held his course in spite of the strong current and swam across without any apparent difficulty. Living in Mohammedan countries one does

ARTIFICIAL FERTILIZATION OF DATE PALMS

well to respect the prejudices and feelings of the people, and we could not but recognise the fairness of the captain's attitude in forbidding the killing of pigs, while regretting being deprived of the sport. Many misunderstandings and dangers would be avoided if Europeans who live or travel in Eastern countries would have more consideration for customs and beliefs that differ from their own.

We arrived at Bassorah without further incident than occasionally grounding on a sand-bar, but it is not always that the trip is made without unpleasant accidents.

I remember once in May we were overtaken by a sandstorm. The day was unusually sultry, and the captain, who had been watching the barometer by night, predicted something out of the ordinary. We retired as usual to our beds on the upper deck, for at that season sleep in the hot cabins is out of the question. It was a bright moonlight night, not a cloud in the sky when we went to sleep. Suddenly we were awakened by a blast of burning hot wind. It was pitch dark, the air was so thick with sand as to be suffocating, and not even the lights hanging, as we knew, close to us could be seen. It seemed as if we would be swept off the deck by the violence of the blast, and with one arm around my wife I clung to the railing with the other, and there we stood, literally gasping and choking. We dared not let go to try to reach the ladder to get down to the lower deck and cabin. Above the roaring of the wind we could hear the shrieks of the deck passengers, whose bedding and even baggage and metal pots were swept overboard. Our steamer was like a toy at the mercy of the winds and seemed to us to be spinning round like a top. Suddenly, close to my ear I heard the voice of our faithful Mendoza, who by a miracle had got over to us, saying, "Hold on, sir, hold on," and he, too, clung to us and the railing. Taking advantage of a mo-

mentary lull the three of us worked our way to the ladder and got down to the lower deck, which we found covered with water, and finally we reached our cabin. Gradually the wind dropped, leaving only the air filled with sand that slowly settled, the light began to break, and soon the clear sky and calm moon above made it seem as if we had just waked up from a nightmare. When it became light enough to see, the captain discovered that we were going down stream instead of up towards Bagdad, as we should have been. The steamer had been turned completely round without his perceiving it, and we had for some time been going back towards Bassorah. These hot sand-storms are among the most dreaded of all the evils that overtake the traveller in Arabia, and they are often the cause of whole caravans perishing.

At the spot where the Tigris and Euphrates join to form the mighty Shatt-el-Arab is the town of Kurna. This place was established in the beginning of the nineteenth century as a barrier between the Persians on one side and the Arabs on the other. There are only about five hundred houses, customs, telegraph and residence of a governor. There is a Turkish gunboat guarding the entrance to the Tigris and Euphrates. The district of Kurna has a population of about 5,000, and its specialty is the making of abas (burnooses) and a special kind of cheese. The cultivation of date plantations is the chief agricultural industry. Kurna is, according to tradition, the site of the Garden of Eden, and an ancient tree is pointed out as the original tree of the "knowledge of good and evil." The branches of this tree are covered with fluttering rags hung on as thank-offerings for prayers answered, or by those who perhaps have come from a long distance to ask for the fulfilment of some desire.

Though at this point the rivers join it is interesting to note how for some distance one can distinguish the two

streams by the cloudy water of the Tigris and the blue, clear water of the Euphrates. Near this spot is the tomb of Ezra, over which is a small mausoleum, built in the time of Shah Abbas. To this tomb pilgrims of Mohammedan sects come as well as Christians and Jews.

From Kurna begin magnificent date groves that run along both sides of the mighty river as far as Bassorah, a distance of ninety miles. Before leaving Turkish Arabia I must say a few words about the date, which is as much a part of the life of the country as the camel. Dates form one of the chief items of export as well as the food of not only this part of Arabia but of many places along the Persian Gulf. To enumerate all the uses of the date palm is to catalogue almost the needs of the everyday life of the people. From dates a kind of vinegar is made and an alcohol called "mastik." From the pits and refuse is made a mixture that is used as food for cattle, from the date juice a syrup or molasses is obtained, and from the fibre ropes and strings are manufactured. The palm wood is used for nearly every purpose, beginning with the wooden beds or "takhts" and ending with boats and frames for the "agul" to be used as window screens. Finally, the pith or heart of the tree is considered a table dainty resembling nuts in taste. As the export of dates increases annually the area occupied by the date palms grows each year.

The cultivation of the date palm demands constant care. The soil is fertile but needs irrigation where—as in most cases—the banks of the Tigris are high; the water has to be drawn up in skins by a primitive but ingenious contrivance worked by animal power. The depth of the gardens running along the banks of the river corresponds to the distance that the water thus obtained may be made to run. Where the banks are low another system is employed, that of a series of canals. Palms are set out at a

certain distance from each other, about one hundred being planted to the "djereba" (a little over an acre), while to each djereba is allotted one "male" tree, all the others being "female." The male tree bears no fruit, but the pollen is taken to fertilise the female tree, that otherwise would bear little or no fruit, and that of an inferior quality. The Arab fellaheen can at once recognise the kind of date by the tree.

In April or May the artificial fertilisation is made. Each year two rows of leaves are added to the palm tree, while the lower rows begin to dry and are cut off in the autumn. This causes the characteristic knotty appearance of the palm tree trunk. In the autumn the young shoots of the female tree are transplanted, and in seven or eight years' time they bear fruit. The palm trees do not reach their maturity until the age of eighteen years, when a good tree is capable of bearing from sixty to three hundred pounds of dates, according to the variety of the tree. There are as many as seventy distinct varieties, each bearing its special name. The most delicate varieties are unfortunately unknown to the European market, as they do not bear handling; some lose their aroma and decay within two days after picking. Palm trees flourish for from sixty to seventy years, and often reach a height of 120 to 140 feet. The fruit grows in huge grape-like clusters, some bunches weighing twenty pounds or even more. In the springtime the gardeners are careful to leave only as many clusters as can mature without injury to the tree, the rest being cut out. As the bunches are very large and thick the dates cannot all ripen at once, but as fast as the outer ones are ripe they are removed and then the others come on, etc. As the fruit grows in the crown of the high trees the gardeners have to climb to the very summit for the fertilisation and subsequent work. It is exceedingly interesting to watch them climb up,

using the uneven bumps left by the leaves as steps.[1] A broad bit of leather or basket work is arranged as a seat, to the ends of which a rope is attached. This rope he passes around the tree and himself, having the seat to sit against or to support himself. Grasping the rope on each side and placing one foot on one of the bumps, he leans forward and throws the rope forward, and up the tree onto the next unevenness. He then braces himself back upon the seat, so holding himself by his own weight. Drawing up the other foot he again throws the rope and makes another step, in this way climbing to the top. Long practice makes these fellaheen very skilful, and to watch the rapid and seemingly easy way in which they climb up and down a tree one would think it the easiest matter in the world. But when any of us tried to do it the result was disastrous.

[1] A good story is told in Bagdad of a vali, or governor, who was sent from Constantinople. His Excellency, transplanted from the delightful shores of the Bosphorus, suffered greatly from the climate of Bagdad. One day complaining bitterly of the heat, he was told that the intense heat was necessary to ripen the dates. "Then have every date palm cut down," ordered the exasperated vali. It took some skill the story adds, to pacify his Excellency and to get him to countermand the order.

CHAPTER XI

FROM BASSORAH TO MUSCAT

The Date Harvest—Cherdaks—Dates as an Item of Export—Sabiehs or Sabians, Followers of John the Baptist—New and Old Bassorah—S.S. "Kilwa"—Mohammerah—Karun Behmishahr—On the Bar—Somali Fight—Bushire Shark Fishing—Bender-Abbas—Hardships of the Persian Gulf—Dominions of the Sultan of Oman—Muscat—Occupations of the Inhabitants of Muscat—English Gunboats—Commerce—Climate—Muscat Lion.

WE arrived at Bassorah just at the period of date gathering, when ocean-going steamers, usually English, fill the harbour waiting to carry their freight of dates to England, Trieste, Egypt and America. At this season the usually quiet gardens are animated. During nearly three months continual work is carried on, under booths or "cherdaks" set up for the purpose. Here dates are sorted and packed in cardboard boxes which are then put in large wooden ones. The former are brought from Germany and Austria and the latter from Norway and America. Both kinds of boxes are brought to Bassorah in sections and put together on the spot. The sorting and packing of the fruit is mostly done by women, who come in hundreds for the date season, bringing their babies and household goods and settling down in huts made of palm or reed matting built by them in the date gardens. While working all these people are fed on dates, the stones of which are carefully collected for a most unusual purpose, as was explained to us on the spot. They are sent to Karachi, in India, where they are cut in two,

each piece taking the form of a coffee berry and easily passing as such. They are then used to adulterate coffee; at least a harmless form of adulteration.

Along the Shatt-el-Arab is an Arab tribe known as the Muntifek, who live by farming and fishing. The fishermen pass almost as much of their time in the water as do the fish they catch. During flood-time one often sees a fisherman's camp on a small bit of island only a few yards square. The fish caught are kept alive in a sort of wooden cage sunk in the water. In this part of the country is another very interesting people of whom but little is known. They call themselves Sabians and are followers of John the Baptist, whom they call "Nebi Yahya" (the prophet John). Their language is Syrian. They live quite apart from the surrounding tribes and perform all their rites in secret, avoiding questions as to their beliefs, which accounts for their being so little known. All that is known definitely of them is that they consider the act of cleansing in running water to be a purification for sin, a christening that they perform several times a year. Water is considered as sacred and cleansing, and every act of life is performed, if possible, in it. The doctrine of "clean and unclean" seems to be the basis of their belief. They do not eat beef, holding cattle to be "unclean." Mutton they eat, but only when the sheep have been killed according to certain forms and in water. All food has to pass through water before being prepared. Among what is considered unclean are women and dead bodies. Their fear of polluting themselves by contact with the dead is so great that while yet alive a sick person is carried and laid beside the already prepared grave. The relatives and friends then sit around waiting, and hardly has the last breath left the dying person when the body is rolled into the grave and hastily covered.

They believe in a future life, and for forty days after a death pray for the departed soul. They have a priesthood called mullahs, who are under higher ecclesiastics known as sheikhs. The priests dress in white and wear green wreaths on their brows. Most of the Sabians are artisans, silversmiths doing work much like that found in the Caucasus. In the province of Bassorah it is estimated that there are about 3,000 of this sect, in Amara 1,000, and about as many among the Muntifeks. They are very devoted to their religion, resisting all attempts made by Mohammedans to convert them by force. Little has been done among them so far by Christian missionaries, and the results have have been still less, I believe.

We are finally in Basrah, or Bassorah, a modern city of the seventeenth century. The ruins of the ancient city are to be found near the small town of Zobeir. When Bagdad was a world-renowned city old Bassorah was the most flourishing port in the East. Finally the old city followed the fate of its sister cities, and nothing remains but a heap of ruins among which rise two old mosques and a bit of the decayed wall. The modern Bassorah is a little over a mile from the western bank of the Shatt-el-Arab, built on canals that are filled with water during the hours of full tide. The ebb of the tide leaves these canals empty, exposing the black bottom, that emits a fearful stench in the hot season. Communication is made by means of boats that are punted, and one's plans for visiting and going about have to be made with regard to the tide. Most of the European residences as well as business places are built along the river front and form a connecting link between the Shatt-el-Arab and the city proper.

In the eighth century the population of Bassorah was as numerous as 160,000, but plague, floods and wars

have reduced it and now there are hardly more than 20,000 inhabitants.

The climate of Bassorah is unhealthful and unpleasant. The dampness makes the heat, though less in degree, more unbearable than that of Bagdad. In addition there are no serdabs, as a cellar of three feet in depth reaches water. The inhabitants dine and sleep on the roof as in Bagdad, but it is impossible to do so without an awning. The dew is so heavy as to soak clothing that may happen to be set outside the roof-like awning placed over the beds. The climate of Bassorah can be judged from the fact that natives of means go to Bagdad as a relief during the hot season!

Bassorah is the port for ocean steamers, as boats drawing twenty-one feet can go up the entire length of the Shatt-el-Arab. The difficulty to navigation is found farther down in the bar formed at the entrance to the Persian Gulf by the immense quantities of sand carried down by the Shatt-el-Arab. Steamers therefore are obliged to take only a part of their cargoes at Bassorah, the rest being sent down to the bar in native sailing boats.

Here we take leave of the good captain of the "Califah" and go on board the "Kilwa," a steamer of some 9,000 tons, once a mail-boat, now carrying cargo, mostly dates. We find ourselves with the entire first-class accommodation at our disposal, as there are no other passengers. A little below Bassorah, at a small place called Feleh, the Shatt-el-Arab forms the dividing line between two empires, Turkey and Persia. On the right or Turkish bank is an unbroken line of date palms and gardens, whereas on the Persian side only occasional clusters of palms or cultivated spots are to be seen. At Mohammerah the river Karun, remarkable as being the only navigable river in Persia, enters the Shatt-el-Arab. In ancient times the Karun had its own navigable outlet,

the Bamishir, that flowed into the Persian Gulf, running parallel with the Shatt-el-Arab. This stream is now accessible only to small native craft, but could easily be made deep enough for navigation. The Karun river, formed by the Susian and Laristan watersheds, is navigable as far as the town of Ahwaz, a distance of about sixty miles. Here high cliffs form waterfalls making a barrier to ships. Remains are to be found of a complicated system of irrigating canals. The Karun river is infested with sharks that find their way up from the Persian Gulf.

Here is Fao, with a Turkish fortification just at the mouth of the Shatt-el-Arab. An hour and a half more and the flat palm-fringed shores disappear and we cross the bar, where we cast anchor, waiting for the boats to bring down the remainder of our cargo.

For some reason they are late and only by the next morning they begin to flock around. They cleverly come alongside, and the loading begins on the lee side of the ship, the boats lying up in order as they arrive, one after the other, in such a way that as one is emptied it slips out and the next in turn takes its place. On each boat are from ten to twelve Arabs, many of them Somalis, strong, muscular fellows without an ounce of extra flesh, and many of them quite six feet tall. Their clothing consists of a loin-cloth, and in spite of the burning rays of the sun their heads are uncovered. Perhaps "uncovered" is hardly the word, for the thick, woolly hair must form a good protection to what we afterwards had proof of being an extraordinarily thick skull.

All went well, the Arabs working fast with jokes and songs, until suddenly the wind changed. The captain then gave orders to continue loading from the other and now sheltered side of the ship. In making the change the boats that had been the last in the waiting row now slipped in first. The men in the boats that had arrived

MOSQUE OF SHEIKH MAARONF KER RHIE

On the Tigris, opposite Bagdad

the earliest and had the right to be unloaded first naturally protested. The protests were at first verbal and given with a volubility possible only to an excited Oriental. From words, however, they soon came to blows, and there followed a fight such as I have never seen before nor since. The Arabs threw themselves into the water and swam to the offending boats, which they boarded, and then began a hand-to-hand tussle. They at first used only the weapons nature had given them—they struck, kicked, bit and tore each other's hair. Then they got hold of anything they could find, oars, poles, and we saw these splintered to bits over the unprotected heads and bodies of the Arabs. Blood flowed so freely as to make the decks slippery, but we saw none of the serious consequences one would expect from the violence of the blows and the thickness of the sticks. Occasionally a man feeling he was getting the worst of the fight would dive overboard, a pink spot marking the place where he disappeared. He would come up and take refuge on a friendly boat, where he would examine his wounds and after regaining his breath he would, if fit, go back to the fray. Sometimes the fight would go on between two or more in the water, where they would try to drown each other. Soon oars and poles came to an end and they tore down bits of the rigging, and finally our Lascar sailors, who were watching with the greatest excitement and were in sympathy with one of the sides, began to throw down into their boats anything that they could find that would serve as weapons.

Matters began to be very serious and the sight was a sickening one. The excitement was spreading among our sailors and our captain felt he must interfere. He therefore ordered the hose to be brought out and directed a stream of water impartially on the fighting mass. Though the force of water was very great and would often stagger a man, it did not have the expected result, and the fight

went on until it stopped of itself, when both parties were exhausted and no one left who was able to continue. As soon as the blows ceased the captain sent down and had the more seriously wounded brought up on our deck. There was no doctor with us, but the first mate had a supply of medicine and a rough knowledge of surgery combined with a delight at having someone on whom to practise it. And this time he had patients to his heart's content! Most of the wounds were bruises and cuts in the head. To everybody's astonishment not a bone was found to be broken, though I myself saw poles as large around as my arm broken in two over the head, shoulders or uplifted arm of the Arabs. They themselves paid no attention to any wounds except severe ones on the head, only trying to stop violent bleeding with the bandages furnished by the captain. Those with cuts in the head, a dozen or more men, gathered around the mate in front of the latter's cabin. The amateur surgeon seated himself on his camp-stool, steadying between his knees the head of his patient, who squatted on the deck. We watched with interest and wonder the proceedings. On shaving the hair the skin of the scalp was found to be of such enormous thickness that no ordinary needle would pierce it. Nothing daunted, the mate produced a huge curved needle used in sewing sacks and sails. This we saw him stick into the skin and then push it with as much force as if he were mending a shoe! The patient in the meantime never blinking, but blissfully pulling at a cigarette furnished him by the interested bystanders. Not a groan did we once hear from any of the patients, though some of the rough operations must have been exceedingly painful if the men possessed nerves. The nearest they ever came to complaint was to ask "if he would soon finish." Only one man was very badly hurt, an old greybeard, who lay for hours unconscious in the bow of his boat, and

even when we left we were not sure that he had regained consciousness. The Arabs did not seem inclined to have our would-be doctor examine him and he was left to nature. After a rest and wash the work began again, nearly all the wounded taking part, and soon jokes and laughter were heard as if nothing had happened to disturb their good relations.

By evening we had finished, and the next day we spent anchored before Bushire. From Karachi up to Bushire there is not one good harbour. In most places the ships are obliged to anchor in the open sea some miles from shore, where, if windy, boats are unable to come out with cargo, and often several days' delay is thus caused and great discomfort, for nothing is so trying to even a moderately good sailor as the tossing of a ship at anchor. Bushire is no exception. There are two harbours, the first five miles from shore, the second two miles, where the ships anchor according to the weather or their draught.

Bushire is a contraction of "Abu-Shahr" (father of cities), so named by its founder, Nadir Shah, who built it in the first half of the eighteenth century, intending it as the base for Persian exports in the Gulf. Bushire has never been a strategic base, but it has been and still is an important port, giving an outlet to the products of the interior of Persia. It carries on a lively commerce with China, England, India and the ports of the Gulf, receiving sugar, manufactured goods, flour, timber, tea, coffee, steel and iron goods; while sending out tobacco, dates, opium, cheese and carpets.

The city lies along a narrow sandy strip separated from the mainland by marshy land and having in the background a range of mountains. The water is very shallow all along the shore. North of Bushire from the mountain pass of Kazeroun begins the mountain plateau of Iran, through which passes the caravan road to Shiraz.

The population of Bushire is estimated to be from 15,000 to 18,000. The climate is hot and can hardly be considered as healthful. There are no serdabs as in Bagdad, but every house has its ventilating shaft, or "badgir," which to some degree cools the rooms.

As we had before been in Bushire and there was nothing of interest to see, we did not go ashore.

All about the steamer we could see sharks swimming in the clear water, watching for what might be thrown out by the cooks. It occurred to us to try our luck at catching them, and one of the ship's officers set to work. He brought a large thick hook, fastened it to a strong tarred line and put on as bait a three-pound fish. For fully an hour we patiently waited, watching the sharks swimming about the tempting but suspicious-looking bait. Finally one made a dart and seized it. We began to draw in our line, but the monster pulled and struggled so that he bent the hook, strong as it was, slipped off it and disappeared. This failure did not discourage us. The mate found a larger hook quite as thick as one's finger, and this time we soon saw a shark bite. Just as success seemed ours he got off, hook and all. Our blacksmith then turned out a third hook, to which a stronger line was attached, and we at last succeeded in catching a small shark about four and a half feet long. It was weird to see with what intense hatred the Lascars pounced upon this, the enemy and dread of all seamen. They began to beat and cut the fish, and the captain had sternly to stop their torturing the living fish and ordered its head chopped off and then thrown into the sea.

There is a curious fact connected with sharks. Europeans hesitate to bathe in many places infested by sharks that have been known to attack them, whereas Arabs of the Somali type and Negroes are untouched. At the island of Bahrein, where pearl-fishing is carried on, the

natives dive freely for pearls, and the times when they are molested are very rare. About Aden the same thing has been noticed, and I have heard, as an explanation of this fact, the theory given that it is the smell of the vegetable oils with which the natives so freely anoint themselves that keeps the fish off. Sharks have been known to go up the river Tigris as far as Bagdad.

Speaking of sharks reminds me of a curious event that took place in 1906 when we were in Constantinople. A shark became entangled in a large fishing net in the Bosphorus and was brought ashore and exhibited for several days for a small sum. This shark was fifteen feet long.

After taking in our cargo and two first-class passengers we left for the next Persian port, Bender-Abbas (port of Abbas).

In the olden times this was a well-known port under the name Camrun or Camroon, and received its present name only from the time of the Persian Shah Abbas.

Owing to the shorter caravan routes through Bushire and the river communication from the Tigris to Bushire the importance of Bender-Abbas has given way to that of Bushire. At the present time only the Yezd and Kerman caravans use Bender-Abbas as their terminus. Here are brought sugar, manufactured goods, metal and glass ware, and from Bender-Abbas are exported the famous Kerman carpets, shawls, silk goods, dates, fish and cheese. As a harbour Bender-Abbas affords little shelter, as the long island of Kishm does not afford protection from the prevailing winds, and owing to the shallowness of the water ships are obliged to anchor two or three miles off the shore. The city is miserable and dirty and the climate very trying, especially during the hot season. All who have means to do so go out during the summer months to a small village some ten miles back from the city among the mountains. The only drinking water

is what is gathered in cisterns during the rainy season. Throughout the town are several huge cisterns for common use, and most houses have their own private ones besides. During the dry hot months this water naturally becomes unfit for use, having a disagreeable taste and odour, and is probably one of the chief causes of the sickness that gives Bender-Abbas the reputation of being one of the most unhealthful places in the gulf.

Some sixty miles east of Bender-Abbas lies the fertile oasis of Menab. Thanks to plentiful springs of water some of the best date palms are found here, as well as other fruit trees peculiar to such a climate.

During a previous voyage we had visited Bender-Abbas under conditions almost costing us our lives. We were on one of the British India mail steamers that stop at various ports. The second mate always went ashore in one of the ship's boats with the mails, even if there were no other business, and he invariably invited my wife and me to accompany him. This we did, glad to see a little of some of these rarely visited spots. It was in June, a hot, absolutely cloudless day. The captain tried to persuade us to give up our trip, as the steamer was anchored nearly four miles from the shore and the barometer showed the near approach of a violent change of weather. Our curiosity to see the place and belief in our own powers of weather prophecy were, however, greater than our prudence or faith in the captain, so we started.

Arriving at the miserable little town we took the mail bag to the post office close by. Though we were inside the building but a few minutes, on coming out we were amazed to see what a change had taken place in the weather. The sky was black, and in an instant so violent a wind-storm came up that our waiting boat was cast upon the beach.

Deafening peals of thunder followed, and the heavens

opened to such a torrent of rain as only falls in these tropical lands. In a few seconds we had not a dry thread on us.

Over and over again our little boat was launched; the sailors pulled bravely, but it was again thrown upon the sand. Finally, with the help of the crowd that in spite of the storm had gathered about us, we succeeded in getting off. The waves rose like mountains before us, the rain continued to pour, and it almost seemed as if we were going to certain destruction. Our steamer could not be seen, and though our men worked hard we made but little headway. On rising to the crest of a wave we would look eagerly for the steamer, but in the darkness she was not to be seen, though we could hear the whistles that were given to guide us. The mate with set teeth sat at the rudder, while my wife and I bailed out the water, that was above our ankles, and as an hour, and then two, passed we began to fear that the steamer had given us up at last and gone on. We could not keep from thinking of an incident of this kind which the captain told us took place not long since at Bender-Abbas. How after waiting a long time and steaming about he had gone on and the boat had never been heard of. Every time our boat paused, as it seemed an eternity, on the crest of a wave before plunging down into the yawning valley, it seemed to us that she could never survive. Finally a shout was raised, we saw the steamer, and, thus encouraged, our men pulled with renewed vigour and we were soon alongside. It was impossible to get up the gangway, so it was not even lowered for us, but we were pulled up, boat and all, and landed on deck, a streaming, soaked party. The captain could not refrain from saying "I told you so," but was very kind and active in getting us below, and had a hot punch made for us and doses of quinine served out to the boat's crew. A wetting in these climes is far more

dangerous than in colder countries, and it is apt to cause fever. We, however, were none the worse for our experience.

I cannot omit saying a few words of the bad name the Persian Gulf very justly has. September is trying, to say nothing of the hot months, when even in India the voyage is looked upon as dangerous, in spite of double awnings, punkahs, and so on. The temperature remains about 90 degrees, even in the night, while by day it rises to above 100 degrees. If during the great heat the wind is with the ship the suffering is very great, even among the Lascar sailors, and often orders are given to turn about and steam back for an hour against the wind to give a little relief. Cases of death by heat apoplexy even at night take place during the hot months. No help is to be had from cold baths, for the water is warmer than the temperature of the body.

Muscat, our next stopping place, is the capital of Oman, the land of the Sultan or Imam, as the natives call him, of Oman. About 2,000 is considered to be the population of Oman, as nearly as can be estimated. In the sixteenth century the Portuguese occupied the port for a time, but were driven out in 1648. In the eighteenth century Oman came under the power of Nadir Shah, who forced the Imam of Oman to pay him a yearly tribute. After the death of Nadir Shah the Arabs of Oman regained their liberty under Ahmed ben Said, the founder of the present dynasty of sultans.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century the Oman fleet was the most powerful in the Persian Gulf. At that time the inhabitants of the littoral of Oman lived almost entirely by piracy. This was carried on to such an extent that the East India Company made three armed expeditions against the Oman pirates, in 1809, 1819, and 1821, when the English finally captured two

ARCH OF CTESIPHON

hundred pirates and forced the sultan to sell his frigates and corvettes. At that period the Sultan of Oman ruled over the eastern coast of the Arabian peninsula and down to Zanzibar, but after the death of Ben Said the kingdom was divided, the elder son receiving Oman and the younger Zanzibar. Owing to the fact that their commercial interests depended upon the safety of ships in the Persian Gulf the English were justified in establishing their control over Oman. The East India Company therefore made a treaty with Sultan Said according to which piracy and slave trade were abolished and the sultan received a subsidy from the Company, which is continued by the present English Government. There is an English political agent at Muscat, who is the advisor to the sultan, and the power of the latter to a certain degree is but nominal.

Oman is not the poor country that a glance at the map would lead one to suppose. Back of the bare volcanic range of mountains that border the sea are fertile valleys, and with irrigation the country would yield great riches. Corn, wheat, oats, tobacco, coffee and indigo are exported, and in the interior are large date plantations. Cattle also are raised and sheep, while the Oman asses are famous throughout Arabia. A commerce is carried on in horses, that are obtained from the Bedouin of the Nedj, the cradle of the Arab and of the Arab horse. Mines of copper and, it is said, of gold are to be found in the mountains. There are in some towns of Oman skilled artisans who make gold and silver filigree work. All the chief towns are on the coast, wherever convenient harbours are to be found. A few miles from the capital, Muscat, which has a population of 30,000, is the town and port of Matra, estimated to have a population of 20,000. Aside from these principal ports are some secondary commercial seaside towns, Kur, Fanal, Inaz, Sokhar and others.

The inhabitants of these sea ports are born seamen and fishermen. Salt fish is one of the chief articles of export, being taken in large quantities to India and even to Australia. They have their own home-made boats, in which they fearlessly go out for long distances, venturing even as far as Bombay, though many are the fatal voyages.

The date export trade is large and almost exclusively with America. Also reed mats and cheese are exported. In exchange Oman receives from abroad manufactured goods, tea and sugar. The climate of Oman is one of the hottest in the world, and, at least that along the seacoast, the most trying. There are only two seasons, the hot and cool. We were to enter Muscat before sunrise, and we were all on deck betimes. As we approached the seemingly unbroken mountain range there was no sign of Muscat, and it was only when quite near that we saw a narrow passage that led us into the awful, almost land-locked harbour. The hills on every side rose black and bare, reflecting so strongly the heat they had absorbed during the day that as we stood on deck it was hard to believe we were not under the rays of a hot sun—though it was before sunrise! As we looked around it seemed as if we were in a pond with almost perpendicular walls of steep black rocks rising three to seven hundred feet, the city itself being along a narrow strip of sand between the sea and the hills that rise straight up behind it. At the entrance of the port and at various places perched high on the rock are remains of watch towers and forts built by the Portuguese when they were masters of the Persian Gulf. The flat-roofed houses are small, with the exception of the "palace" of the sultan and the house of the English resident. We cast anchor close to the shore, where we had a full view of the tiny place, and what at once arrested our attention was a most unusual sight. A large house, that of the British resident, they told us,

had only three sides! The entire sea front was open like a doll's house. From the deck of the steamer we could therefore see the inside of every room of the house, and even the poor consul himself as he sat at his table. It seemed that a few days previously the entire sea wall of the badly built house had slid down, leaving the consul to lead this exposed life! The harbour was quite lively, a number of craft of various kinds being there and an English gunboat that is stationed at Muscat constantly. Though the sailors are all Indians and the gunboat is changed every six months, yet so unhealthful and trying is the heat that nearly every voyage there are cases of suicide, insanity or heat apoplexy, we were told.

At the invitation of the United States consul we went to lunch with him on shore and have a look at the town. Though accustomed to Eastern cities, Muscat proved unlike anything we had yet seen. Owing to the small space between the mountains and the sea upon which to build the town, the streets are so narrow that while sitting at the open window of the American consulate we could with a cane touch the wall on the opposite side of the street. No horses are kept in the city and few donkeys, the stables of the sultan and rich people being in a valley back of the town. The filth and heat in the streets, owing to their narrowness, surpass that of most Oriental towns. The people met in the streets are of the most varied types. One sees Indians, Negroes, Arabs, Persians and Turks, but no Europeans. When we were in Muscat there were but two Europeans living there, the British resident and the United States consul, who was a Scotchman.

Muscat left a very unpleasant impression upon us, and the stories told of the heat by the two unfortunate Europeans whom we met made us realise that there were worse places than Bagdad to live in. There are no serdabs, no gardens to give refreshing green, and the heat

of the day has to be passed in the closed rooms. At sunset when the inhabitants of the city go up on the roof there is not much relief, for the radiation of the heat from the sun-baked rock all around makes it almost unbearable. We were assured that what we had taken as a legend of the Gulf was a fact, namely, that many people have their servants sprinkle them, bed and all, several times during the night with watering pots!

The Oman Government is on a most patriarchal system, the decisions being made in disputed cases by the imam according to the tenets of the Koran. We were in Muscat when the imam had established a most original form of punishment. In a strong room he had a lion chained in such a way that the beast could almost reach the opposite wall. When a prisoner considered as deserving of such punishment was brought before the imam, the lion was starved for a couple of days, and then the unfortunate man was chained in the one corner of the room that the lion could not quite reach. With roars of rage the hungry lion would spring at the man, who by flattening himself against the wall only just escaped the claws and open mouth of the huge beast. This torture was continued, according to the gravity of the crime, from a few hours to a couple of days, and instances were given of the wretched prisoner going mad. Later, owing to the influence of the British resident, this cruel punishment was abolished.

We left Muscat with feelings of relief, and were once more impressed with the truth often forced upon us during our five years in these hot lands, that human beings are able to adapt themselves to almost every condition, even to those that are seemingly impossible.

CHAPTER XII

BOMBAY, CASTES, AND THE TOWERS OF SILENCE

Bombay, its Significance—Variety of Nationalities—From the "Slavansky Bazaar" to Watson's Hotel—History and Development of Caste—Laws of Manu—Principle of Preserving Race of the Conquerors Distinct—Marriages—Caste as Seen To-day, and its Effect on Daily Life—English Feeling of Caste towards Natives—History of Bombay—Parsis—Similarity of Russian and Indian Styles of Architecture—Personal Reminiscences—Tower of Silence—My Acquaintance with Parsis—Baku and the Eternal Fire—Zoroaster, his Teaching—Zend Avesta—Traces of Zoroastrianism in the Persian Religion—Gabars, their Former and Present State in Persia—"Mobeds," "Andjuman"—Rites and Ceremonials—Shah Abdul Azim near Teheran—Ruins of Rei and Tower of Silence.

OUR steamer approaches Bombay, the second city of importance in India after Calcutta. The harbour is the finest on the Indian coast. Here are brought the riches of the entire world, from Europe, America, Egypt, Turkey, Arabia and Persia. The harbour is full of steamers and craft of all sizes and descriptions, that fly the flags of nearly every nation. As soon as the anchor is dropped the usual bustle and hurry begins, passengers leave, and we soon find ourselves in the custom-house A more motley crowd or greater babel of tongues it would be hard to imagine. One's eye has scarcely time to take in one picture before another is presented; and the ear hardly finds time for conscious hearing of the various tongues: familiar European words mingle with guttural Arabic or liquid Persian, and then sounds of languages quite unfamiliar to my modest linguistic powers. This

babel is not surprising if one takes the trouble to remember that the people of India speak 150 dialects, derived from twenty languages that are divided into three main groups: the Ario-Indian, spoken by 221,000,000 (Hindus, Bengalis, Marethas, etc.), Dravidian, the dialects of which are spoken by 56,500,000, and finally the Tibeto-Burman, spoken by 9,500,000.

Here we see an Englishman talking with a Brahmin, there an excitable Frenchman gesticulating and trying to explain something in broken English to a dignified Parsi; yonder a Brahmin, calmly smoking a cigar, is listening to a turbaned individual. Not far from us, perched on a post, is an almost naked Indian, squatting with his knees drawn up to his chin, clasping them by long sinewy arms. He looks just like an ape, as indeed for some seconds we take him to be. All this changing crowd and babel of tongues begins to go to one's head, and we gladly finished the customs formalities and found ourselves driving to Watson's Hotel, situated in the European part of the town. In the vestibule of the hotel my wife and I happened to exchange a word in Russian and were startled to hear our tongue spoken by a gentleman addressing us in Russian. He proved to be one of the hotel men, whom the tide of fortune had thrown upon these far-away shores—from the Moscow "Slavansky Bazaar" to Watson's Hotel, Bombay!

Our rooms opened out onto a veranda commanding a view of the University Square and an imposing clock tower, the latter being the gift of a rich Parsi to the city.

At the period of which I write Watson's Hotel was the best in Bombay, but in many ways it seemed primitive enough. Owing to the Anglo-Indian custom of having servants travel with one they did not keep a sufficient staff of waiters, and had we not our own faithful men we should have joined those who complained of the lack

of service. Yet there seemed to be any number of servants, but as each one could only do a certain class of work there was no making anything out of the chaos. One would bring water, a second sweep the rooms, a third make the beds, etc. This was our first experience with caste as seen in everyday life, this evil which has struck such deep roots all over India as to have even touched the English themselves, though they are unconscious of it. Of the 274,000,000 inhabitants of India, 207,000,000 are Hindus, caste-observing people, 62,500,000 are Mohammedans, 9,500,000 Buddhists, aboriginals 8,500,000, Christians 2,000,000, and the remainder are Parsis, Jews and other smaller sects.

If we add to the Hindus the Buddhists also observing castes, though under a different definition, on the principle of "good and evil" spirits, we have over 218,000,000 of the inhabitants under this heavy yoke.

The caste principle dates back 3,000 years, and had its origin in Brahminism, and Brahma is the central figure of its system. It grew originally out of the racial distinctions when the earliest Aryan emigrants settled in India. The pure Aryan issuing from the Creator's mouth is the Brahmin. The fighting caste, or Kshatriyas, sprang from the arms of Brahma, the Creator. Vaisya, the agriculturist issuing from the loins of Brahma, form the third caste, while the lowest in the social scale, the degraded Sudra, are regarded as coming from the Creator's feet. This last and lowest caste is by far the most numerous one.

The full development of the rules regarding caste was given much later in the Code of Manu, supposed to have been written five hundred years before Christ by the mythical Brahmin sage of that name.

Manu took the ground that the only measure by which the handful of conquerors could be kept from being as-

similated by the preponderating masses was by raising rigid and immovable barriers to separate them. Intermarriage between persons of different castes was forbidden. The breaking of this law was punishable by social ostracism, loss of all rights and property. Those thus excluded from their caste became pariahs and formed a mixed caste. The code of Manu gave, however, in some instances, more liberal interpretation of this law —for instance, in cases where a Hindu took to himself a wife of a lower caste. In such circumstances only the children of such a wife belonged to the lower caste. If, however, a woman married into a lower caste she was forever excluded and remained a pariah.

The next law in the code of Manu provides for the complete isolation of the castes in everyday life. This is brought about by the law forbidding one caste to eat with those of another, or to touch anything belonging to them. The most degraded of the pariah caste were obliged to live apart from all others and to have a special sign by which they could be recognised and avoided. They were only allowed to keep dogs and donkeys, no other domestic animals, and dressed in clothing obtained from corpses. Fourteen per cent. of the inhabitants of India at present are said to belong to these lower castes.

As a special privilege polygamy is permitted to the highest castes, while the Sudras are not allowed more than one wife. The number of wives permitted is also according to the caste. Brahmins may have four wives, Kshatriyas three and Vaisyas two. The marriage ceremony also differs in pomp according to the caste. Suttee, or self-immolation of widows at the cremation of their husbands, was practised mostly among the Brahmin caste. The English Government met with great difficulty in abolishing this custom, and in spite of severe laws occasional instances are still met with at the present time.

TOWN OF BASSORAH ON THE CREEK

But in spite of barriers and castes the laws of nature would have their course, and mixed marriages have during the centuries taken place often enough to influence in some degree the types. As time went on other changes took place in the law governing castes, giving rise to many smaller castes. Such were formed with each new profession or occupation, so that one could almost define castes as being corporations. Other shadings in the caste life are based on religious beliefs forming sects, etc.

In spite of all these changes and modifications caste is to-day a great institution with which the British Government has to deal. It complicates every branch of administration. On the march the commissariat department has to have it in view—railway carriages must be furnished for the various castes. In times of famine and epidemic, particularly, the obstacles of food and isolation raised by the caste rules are hard to overcome.

The Anglo-Indian has to keep a large number of servants, thanks to caste. For no money will the butler behind your chair sweep your room. The cook will not carry water nor the coachman groom the horse nor cut its grass. The caste spirit has even had some influence on other religions in India, even upon the Mohammedan and Christian. It is an interesting fact that the so-called Syrian Christians, who adopted Christianity in the sixth century, belong to the highest caste, while the rest of the native Christians are considered as belonging to the lower castes.

In their attitude towards natives the English have, probably quite unconsciously, adopted the caste feeling. Anglo-Indian society holds itself as distinct from the natives as if a wall of caste surrounded them. A native may rise to the rank of officer, but the European officers' mess is closed to him, and with few exceptions he will not be invited to dine.

As to intermarriage with the natives, the Code of Manu could be no stricter, and the "half-castes," or "Eurasians," as the offspring of such marriages are called, are pariahs to English society. Possibly because of their social position, or from hereditary causes, but the fact remains that these descendants of European and Indian parents are generally of a low type of intellect, and are failures in life, being without patriotism, principles or traditions.

The isolation of the European from native society is further accentuated by the European part of the cities being generally apart from the native. The natives also travel separately from the English by railway, to their mutual satisfaction. A significant fact in connection with the relation of the English to the natives is that few Englishmen take the trouble to know the names of their native servants. The general name "boy" for men servants or "ayah" for the maids is sufficient, and our Mendoza and Fernando spoke often of this difference when they lived with us and were treated on more friendly terms.

Bombay came into the possession of the English crown, together with Tangiers and £300,000, as the dowry of Catherine of Braganza, when she married King Charles II. in 1662. King Charles handed the administration of Bombay over to the famous East India Company. In 1690 Bombay was taken by the Mongols, but was soon retaken by the English, and from that period the population increased and flourished.

The majority of the inhabitants of Bombay to-day are Hindus, Mohammedans and Parsis. The latter are fire worshippers, the descendants of the ancient Persians who settled here some 1,200 years ago, when Islamism began to take root in Persia. It is estimated that there are about 100,000 Parsis in India, of which number some

84,000 are to be found in Bombay. The Parsis are the chief bankers and commercial people of India. Religious differences and rivalry between them and the Mohammedans led to frequent outbreaks, one of the most serious being caused by the Parsis printing a translation of Washington Irving's "Life of Mohammed," when it needed the interference of the English troops to restore order. One cannot but admire the liberal and prudent attitude of the English in all religious questions touching the many conflicting races brought under their rule in India.

The present Bombay, with a population of some 800,000, is divided into the native town, or old city, and the European, or new. All the business and commerce is to be found in the European part or the "fort." The streets here are broad, clean and well built. As I looked about at the magnificent public buildings, the University, the Post Office, the Victoria Terminus, costing many millions, I could not but exclaim, "Can this be India?" There was with all its strangeness and novelty something familiar, something that made me feel I had seen it before. Suddenly it came to me: it is our white-stoned Mother Moscow! The architecture has so much in common with it that I cannot but think there must be a close connection between the Indian and ancient Russian architecture. But I am wandering from the limits of my competency.

Bombay has a University with over a thousand students, many benevolent institutions, schools and hospitals, among which is one for lepers. Back of the city are the Malabar hills, covered with terraces and beautiful private residences. The view from here of the city and surrounding islands is very fine.

There was something fairy-like in our first impression of India, and the longer we remained the more the en-

chantment grew. A tropical night comes back to my memory. We were driving among the gardens of Malabar hill to a dinner. My wife's modern evening dress and my dress suit seemed to me strangely out of place under the shadow of the stately pines and the fragrance of the hot Eastern night. I can see the lights of the luxurious bungalow, the bright dinner table, the soft-footed native servants in picturesque dress and snowy turbans; the broad veranda leading into the garden enticingly lighted with coloured lanterns, which, however, lost all charm when the hostess's voice was heard cautioning some one to keep to the well-lighted paths, as a cobra had just been seen there—all this comes back to me to-day as if it were but yesterday, and with a charm that the Orient can never lose for those who have once known it. I remember another dinner in a circle of hospitable Scotchmen. The same Eastern atmosphere, native servants, but during the dinner a Scotchman in kilts walked around the table discoursing sweet music (to the Scotchmen at least) on the national bagpipe. The English have to a very remarkable degree succeeded in blending the comforts and order of the English home with the charm of the Orient, both in the style of buildings and in their life.

The day after we arrived we were reminded that European civilisation had permeated here, under the form of a cabman's strike! The discontented procession massed in the square in front of our hotel, but they were orderly and absolutely silent. We saw a police, or government agent of some kind, ride up, towering above the crowd from the back of a camel. He addressed a few words to the people, waving the short stick he carried, and in a few moments the crowd melted away as silently as it had formed, and before an hour had passed, the cabmen were at their posts as if nothing had happened.

One afternoon was spent in the horse market, where

are to be found the horses brought down the Gulf from Arabia, as well as others from Australia and England, and where sportsmen from all over India gather.

Among the many interesting features of Bombay is the great "Tower of Silence," where the Parsis expose their dead to be eaten by vultures. In driving there we passed the Christian, Mohammedan and Hindu cemeteries, in the latter of which we saw signs of a cremation just being completed.

The Tower of Silence is outside the town and is a huge round stone building. There is but one entrance to the tower, and that is opened only when the priests carry in a corpse. On the top of the tower were perched large numbers of the huge repulsive birds, some of which, on seeing our party approach the grounds, slowly sailed about over our heads, anticipating probably that we had brought them a feast! We, of course, were not allowed to enter the grounds, nor did we ask to do so; it was sufficiently gruesome seeing these birds.

The Parsis have always had for me a special interest, being, as they are, the remnants of one of the oldest religions; and I have happened to come in contact with them both in Russia and Persia, as well as India.

My first acquaintance with Parsis was in Baku, in the early seventies, when our petroleum industry first began. At that time travellers visiting Baku were not drawn so much by the interest of seeing the petroleum works, as in visiting the source of the "eternal fire" and the temple of the fire worshippers. This temple was a small square building surmounted by a dome and having small towers at the corners. It was built just over the spot where the gas brought through one of the towers seemingly issued from the earth, and burned in several flames. There was a sort of altar on which stood plates with bits of sugar, and here, too, were the lights that were

never extinguished. Two priests, or Mobeds, sent from Bombay, served in the temple. For a small sum they would sing and chant and then give each visitor a piece of sugar. Owing to the belief in the miraculous origin of the fire, Baku was considered to be the most sacred place of the Parsis, and was called by them the "City of the Rose."

My second acquaintance with these people was in Teheran. A certain Manukchi Lemdji Sahib, a Parsi gentleman, who has done much for his coreligionists in Persia, gave me much information concerning the teachings of Zoroaster, or Zardusht, and of the customs and rites of the Parsis. Finally, while living in Meshed, in 1891, I succeeded, after much difficulty, in obtaining for the Parsi merchants of Kerman the right, hitherto denied them, of passing through the sacred Mohammedan city of Meshed on their way to Transcaspia in view of establishing direct commercial relations. As a token of their appreciation of my efforts in their behalf the council of Parsi elders, living in Kerman, sent me at the Persian New Year, "No-ruz," an illuminated manuscript addressed in Persian.

As the Parsis may not be known to all those into whose hands this book may fall, I think that my readers may not object if I share with them some of my notes and reminiscences concerning these most interesting people.

Zoroaster, Zardusht, or Zoradusche, was born about 800 years before Christ, as many scholars think, in or near Urumiah in the northwest part of Persia. Very little is known of his life. His religion came as a protest against paganism. The basis of his teaching was a pure monotheism, a belief in one supreme, formless, all-powerful, merciful and just Being, worthy of all adoration. His teaching was further founded on the worship of this Being, good deeds, and eschewing evil.

Zoroaster, however, introduced the dual powers of good (creating) and evil (or destroying), under the names of Ormuzd and Ahriman. Fire and light are the attributes of the former and darkness of the latter. Zoroaster's teaching further includes the doctrine that all that happens to man is for the best. The chief duties of man are love to his neighbour, goodness, and hospitality. His teachings are found in the Zend Avesta and consist of small parts, the most important being the "Vendidad" and "Yasna." The former is composed of the revelations of Zoroaster and the second of prayers. In the Avesta are also to be found treatises on philosophy, astronomy, medicine, etc.

In the sixth century before Christ all Persia professed the religion of Zoroaster, which was at its height during the Sassanian dynasty from 227 to 636 A.D., but after this time it began to be crushed out by the new religion, that of Mohammed, that came to conquer by the sword.

Many find the idea of sun worship in the present custom observed in most large Persian cities, of the daily music in the "Nehareh Khana," or music houses. These are built on a high roof, and as the sun is sinking, and until the last rays have faded, weird music is discoursed. The musicians, with drums and long trumpets, such as we see in pictures illustrating the fall of the walls of Jericho, solemnly march round the roof as they play. The same is done at sunrise. The custom of counting their new year, or "No-ruz," at the time of the vernal equinox, is perhaps also to be traced to the same source.

The followers of Zoroaster remained true to their faith during the Greek conquest under Alexander the Great, but they were unable to withstand the fanatical spirit of Mohammedanism. The majority of the few who remained faithful to the old faith removed to India, and particularly to Bombay. Here we find them as

Parsis, a prosperous, intelligent class, in whose hands is found most of the banking and commercial business of Bombay. Many of the Parsis have had English college education and have achieved success in science. They are justly proud of the fact that among their people are neither paupers nor prostitutes. Many benevolent and educational institutions in Bombay testify to the public spirit of the Parsis, and they are loyal subjects to the British crown.

Quite different is the fate of their coreligionists in Persia, where they are generally known as "Gabers," and I shall use this term, though in Persia it is one of indignity, as signifying "unfaithful." The Parsis call themselves "Zardusht," or Farsis, and Parsis. There are not over 11,000 of these people now to be found in Persia. The largest colony of about 8,000 is in Yezd, 2,000 in Kerman and only 300 in Teheran, while a few are scattered in Shiraz, Kashan and Kum.

One cannot but feel a strong admiration for this handful of ancient people, who, amidst adverse circumstances, have kept pure their faith, though living among the fanatical Moslem Persians. The time when the murder of a Parsi passed unpunished hardly belongs to ancient history, and the forcible abduction of Parsi girls into a harem was of common occurrence. Until the middle of the nineteenth century the Parsis were greatly restricted in their rights. In the bazaars they were not allowed to touch anything, as the touch of an "unfaithful" was pollution; they were not allowed to build two-storied houses, and were forced to wear a dress that distinguished them from Mohammedans, so that the latter could avoid inadvertently touching these unclean beings.

A special tax was imposed upon them in common with other non-Moslem Persian subjects. They could not ride horses, only donkeys, and even then were obliged

GROUP OF BOMBAY PARSEES

to dismount when meeting a Mullah or Moslem of any distinction. In more ancient times their limitations were even greater. It was only in the latter half of the past century that the position of the Parsis began to improve. This change was due to the efforts of their coreligionists, in Bombay, among whom were many rich Parsi gentlemen who did not hesitate to sacrifice large sums in presents to Persian officials. Thanks to their efforts and also to the English representatives in Persia in the eighties of the last century, the Gabers were exempted from their extra taxes and were given religious freedom. Some ten years later they obtained the right of dressing in all colours except green, which is regarded as the sacred colour of the Mohammedans. Owing to these new privileges they were able to follow their commercial instincts with more freedom. Their shrewd practical business capacity and their honesty enabled them to profit by this freedom, and one already meets with rich merchants, although even now they are not permitted entrance to cities containing Mohammedan shrines of importance. As I mentioned above, it was with the greatest difficulty that, in 1901, I obtained permission for a few of these merchants to pass through Meshed on their way to Russia.

During the past thirty-five years other concessions have been made; they are permitted to have a representative at Teheran and to establish their own schools, the first they have had during the Persian dominion.

How purely and intelligently the teachings of Zoroaster are observed by the Gabers in Persia, I am unable to say. It is very possible, that living for 1,200 years among a Moslem people has not failed to affect their religious observances.

Their religious teachers are called Mobeds, but they do not seem to possess sufficient influence to uphold their authority, and in attempting to do so they are hampered

by the fact that any one not wishing to submit to them can easily join the Mohammedans. The Andjuman, the members of which are chosen by the colony, has considerable power in matters concerning civil laws.

The doctrine of pure and impure has a large place in the teachings of Zoroaster, and most complicated ablutions are enjoined in case of pollution from contact with what is "impure." These are divided into "great" and "small" purifications. The lesser purification is demanded for the many smaller pollutions, which in everyday life cannot be avoided. The "great" purification is only needed in exceptional cases, as, for example, after contact with a corpse. It is, however, considered advisable to perform the greater purification at least once in a lifetime. This is performed by the Mobed in a building set apart for the purpose, and the ceremony continues nine days, during which time the individual going through the rite cannot leave the premises, and all food is brought to him by the Mobeds. During the purifications, instead of water the urine of bulls is used.

At the birth of an infant astrologers are called in to cast the horoscope of the new-born babe. Between the ages of seven and fifteen a ceremony answering to that of confirmation takes place, when the boy or girl is initiated into the religious community. Marriages, as is common in the East, take place at a very early age. It is not unusual to see married boys of fifteen and girls of twelve. The marriage ceremony resembles that of the Mohammedans in that the bride herself does not take part. Her substitute performs the necessary formalities, and though the contract is drawn up in the presence of the Mobeds, it is more civil in character than religious. The Mobed reads aloud the obligations to be undertaken by both parties, in which wifely obedience has a large part, and then invokes the blessing of Heaven, after which

sugar and sweets are passed around and the ceremony is at an end. Polygamy, owing probably to Moslem influence, is occasionally met with, but not often. The remains of the fire temples are to be found in various parts of Persia, as in Takhti Suleyman, Nakshi Rustem, and mounds of ashes about the plain of Urumiah. At present their worship is held in some modern buildings where the perpetual fire, believed to have been handed down from the time of Zoroaster, is carefully tended. During the ceremony verses from the Avestas are chanted.

As to the "Towers of Silence," I have only once had occasion to see them in Persia. Some six miles southeast of Teheran is one of the numerous Moslem Shiite shrines, that of Shah Abdul Azim. To this place on Fridays a motley crowd of Persians may be seen flocking, some to pray, others for a sort of picnic. At the present time there is a railroad over the short distance, the first and only one in Persia. Near this place is a miraculous spring that owes its origin to Ali, and is therefore known as the "Cheshme Ali," or "Spring of Ali." On the rocks near this spring is a sculpture representing Fehti Ali Shah seated on a throne and surrounded by courtiers. A rock also is shown bearing the impress of Ali's foot. Thanks to the modern popularity of this spot the ruin of "Rei" or "Rei Tower" is kept in mind. This was the ancient Median capital, and is one of the several cities that claim to be the birthplace of Zoroaster. It was known in Biblical times as "Ragha."

At the present time the ruins are represented only by a heap of brick and mortar, where one can pick up bits of broken pottery and sometimes even choice pieces giving the *reflet métallique* so much prized by connoisseurs of porcelain. The tower that forms part of what was the citadel was restored in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Near the tower, also on the face of the

rocks, is a bas-relief representing Fehti Ali Shah on horseback, slaying a lion. Unfortunately this sculpture was carved on an older one representing a Sassanian king. Fehti Ali Shah had this obliterated to make room for his own picture, but fortunately pictures of the former sculpture are preserved to us by older travellers.

On the hills to the east of the ruins of Rei is to be found the tower of silence of the Gabers, probably one of the most ancient in existence. It resembles the one I saw later in Bombay in that it is a round whitish tower, but, unlike the latter, possesses no door, as the Gabers fear Mohammedan desecration. The corpse is therefore lifted over by means of ladders and ropes. By climbing the hill one can get a good look down into the interior of the tower. The place where the dead bodies are exposed is divided into equal squares, about seven feet each way, as far as one could judge at that distance. As the touch of a corpse is pollution, special persons are set apart for the duty of receiving and undressing the corpses. After each burial, if it can be so called, they are obliged to purify themselves, and in cases when one of them leaves the profession, he has to go through the nine days' purification. The body, having been undressed, is laid upon the receptacle for the corpses, and left there to the vultures that, during the ceremony, wheel about in anticipation of their horrid feast. In ancient times the corpses were given to wild beasts and dogs, the latter even now taking a prominent part in the ceremony connected with the dead. In Persia, where dogs are looked upon as unclean, it is difficult to get a Gaber to talk about this custom of introducing dogs to exorcise the evil spirit.

When a Parsi is about to die, the Mobeds read prayers of repentance of sins, and the ceremony of extreme unction consists in wetting the lips with consecrated bulls' urine. After the body has been washed (also in bulls'

urine) by the "corpse washer" the ancient rite of "Sagdid" (glance of a dog) is observed even in our time. As the eye of the dog is believed to frighten away the evil spirits that may hover about, a dog is induced to approach and look at the corpse. Bits of bread are to this end scattered in the room, and some placed on the breast of the body, and a common hungry street dog being called in, he eagerly eats it.

Of the Christian missionary work among the Gabers, I am unable to give information. Even in India the Parsis are more apt to make proselytes, as in the case of intermarriages with Hindus, than to adopt another religion. Instances of Parsis becoming Moslems are very rare, and are usually brought about by force rather than by conviction.

CHAPTER XIII

THUGS IN INDIA

India Past and Present—Secret Sects—Mutual Relations of the Conquerors and Conquered—Hockley, Hutton and Colonel Meadows-Taylor—Two Opinions Concerning Thugs—Condition of India in First Half of Nineteenth Century—Period of Disorder and Oppression—Trials by Ordeals—Formation of Bands of Robbers—Pindarees—Gussoons—Methods of Travelling—Thugs as Companions on the March—Doctrine of Thugs—Brahma, Vishnu and Siva—Goddesses—Bhowanee, or Kali—Initiation of Thugs, their Duties—Thank-Offerings—Divisions of Work among Bands—Inveiglers, Stranglers, Grave-Diggers—Thug Methods of Working—First Intimation of Thugs in 1810—Trial of 1812—Expedition against Thugs—Commission Formed in 1830 to Investigate Accusations Brought against Thugs—Conclusion of Commission and Result of its Work—From Bombay to Jiddah—Perim—Circumstances Connected with Annexation of Perim—Aden.

INDIA is one of the most interesting countries of the world, and presents an inexhaustible field of exploration for the historian, ethnographer, philologist and artist. The peculiar political formation of this country also has its interest. Here we see alongside of the English provinces, with their two hundred and twenty-one millions of inhabitants, many small "native states" comprising altogether a population of some seventy-three millions. These native states retain in various degrees their independence so far as their internal government goes. The sovereign power of such states is, however, limited. These limitations are generally formed by some of the following conditions: Limitations as to the size of the

standing army they are allowed to keep; obligations as to joining their forces with those of the English in time of need; obligations in regard to ceding territory for railways; deprivation of the right of carrying on independent diplomatic relations with foreign Powers; obligations of rulers to appear at durbars, or the formal political receptions which are held yearly with great pomp by the viceroy.

The ceremonies connected with these durbars are strictly carried out, and the reception of each ruler corresponds to his rank, rajah, maharajah, nizam, etc., each having his own salute of a certain number of guns according to his rank. These native rulers are obliged to permit the appointment of a special English representative styled resident. The powers of these residents are greater or less in different states, and go so far as giving the right of interfering at times in the question of succession to the throne.

The present state exists in India only since the Mutiny of 1857, which ended the existence of the East India Company, which had governed for over two and a half centuries. From 1858, when the control of India came under the British crown, the English have appointed viceroys, under whom active reforms have been made. They set to work to establish the finances of the country on a firm basis, organise civil and criminal jurisdiction, limit the autocratic powers of the native rulers with their attendant misrule and cruel practices. Commercial and strategical railways were built, and gradually, but steadily, India developed into its present condition.

The building of a system of railways made communication easy and facilitated better acquaintance with a land which hitherto had been shrouded with so much that was mysterious and secret. But in spite of the ease with which we can become acquainted with the India of

to-day, with its railways, electric lights and other attributes of civilisation—or perhaps on account of it—one is more drawn to study the old India with its fakirs, its secret religious sects and customs. Of these times and peoples, one particular sect, that of the Thugs, has always had a peculiar interest for me, from what I could learn of them through books that are now seldom seen. In these old records we have the account of persons who at least remembered those who had taken such an active part in the suppression of this most horrible sect. I should like to share with my readers some of the information thus obtained. In India, as in all conquered lands, a peculiar historical fact is repeated. The conquering race stands far from the conquered. The one and the other fail to understand or to know each other. The conquerors come with different views, feelings and ideals. They set about carrying out practical schemes for developing and raising the country, and no doubt do a very great deal towards that end; but they do little towards penetrating into that complicated organism that represents India with its heterogeneous population, with its various religions, superstitions and castes. The English did not have Gil Blas in India, such as was their countryman Morier in Persia, the creator of the immortal "Hajji Baba." In this wonderful book the gifted writer portrayed Persian life and customs with a fidelity and understanding that places his work higher than anything that has ever been written on Persia.

The official world of the conqueror gets its information from two sources—the upper sphere in its diplomatic relations, official receptions, durbars in India and "Destar-Khanas" in Central Asia; the lower sphere becomes acquainted as administrators and judges. In the first case the impression received is generally optimistic—in the second pessimistic. Two extremes are arrived at,

there is no middle, unless some talented person appears who gives himself to the work of studying the soul of the people. The results of this lack of understanding the people always culminate in events which fall upon the conquerors with the unexpectedness of a thunderclap. It is enough to remember the Indian mutiny, and in later years the Andijan massacre in our Central Asian provinces. Such also was the exposure of the Thugs. The same parallel can be carried out in regard to the mutual relations of a higher civilisation and race when brought in contact with those living on a lower plane of culture. This may be illustrated by the Armenian massacres in Turkey and the Boxer uprising in China.

The literature open to the student of Indian life is very limited. One of the first to fill this want was an obscure member of the Civil Service in Bombay, Hockley, the author of "Pandurang Hari" and "Tales of the Zenana." Then followed Hutton, in 1857, with "Thugs and Dacoits," and Colonel Meadows-Taylor, who wrote "A Noble Queen," "Seeta," "Tippoo Sultan," "Tara" and the "Confessions of a Thug" (1879). Of late years many writers have been added to the list, among whom none are more widely known than the talented author of "Kim," who has revealed a deep insight into the heart of the natives. As to Hockley and Meadows-Taylor, their works are forgotten and are now only to be found on the shelves of old book dealers. Of these works the "Confessions of a Thug" gives more material than any other similar production—except dry official accounts—for acquaintance with this sect, that, thanks to the English, has ceased to exist in India.

The popular impression regarding Thugs is that it is a society or band living by robbery and murder; that they were forbidden to shed blood and therefore strangled their victims, cleansing their sin by offering sacri-

fices. A Thug who spilled even one drop of blood was despised by his kind.

Others supposed them to be simple highway robbers, whose object was plunder, and that the particular form of killing was adopted as the most simple and noiseless, when falling upon a sleeping party of travellers.

To understand how this sect of stranglers came to be so widely spread, it is necessary to glance at India as it was in the first half of the last century.

At that period the entire country was broken up into many small, independent principalities under despotic rulers who waged constant warfare with each other. Anyone committing a crime in one district could always escape justice by crossing over into the next territory. Regular criminal codes there were none. Crimes were summarily punished, or, if the criminal had sufficient means to pay well, he might evade punishment altogether. rajahs, maharajahs, etc., although styled the "fountains of justice," fell short of being such in fact. They themselves often organised robbing expeditions, put to death or torture innocent persons, or for some reason inconvenient, and, on the other hand, gave refuge to murderers and criminals.

In the absence of regular civilised courts there was a system of trial by ordeal, or "God's trial." This was to be found under many forms: the trial by weighing, by fire, by water, poison, rice, boiling oil, etc., etc. The trial by weighing consisted in weighing the accused, who then performed his ablutions and prayers, and the act of condemnation being fastened to his forehead, he was again weighed. If the weight then proved greater than at first, he was considered guilty and punished accordingly. If the weight was less, the man was innocent. In case each time the weight was the same, they kept on weighing until a difference was found!

The trial by fire was performed by having the accused run barefooted over a bed of hot coals; if the feet were not burned, the accused was set free. The ordeal by water consisted in giving water to the accused in which an idol had been washed. If during fourteen days an illness was not the result, he was declared innocent. The poison trial was in two forms; the first being by the preparation in fat of seven small pills in one of which was some kind of poison, generally arsenic. The accused had to choose and swallow one, and if he did not die, he was supposed to be innocent. The second form was in placing a ring and a live cobra in a narrow-necked jug. The accused was made to pass his hand in and get the ring; if he did so without being bitten by the snake, he was declared innocent. The ordeals by hot iron and boiling oil were on the same principle, as well as many other such forms of trial.

The various rulers and princes lived with great pomp and splendour, spending vast sums on the maintenance of their palaces, harems, dancing girls and elephants. The last named were fed at the expense of the people and were a great burden to them. It was in vain that grocers' shops were quickly closed at the approach of one of the rajah's elephants. The mahout would drive the elephant up to the door and give the command "Tor dallo," "Break to splinters," and the mighty beast would soon have the shutters down, and the owner, found hidden behind his bags of rice, would gladly come forward and give what the elephant needed if only to escape further destruction.

Under such conditions of misrule and the frequent famine years, it was natural that many of the people, pushed to extremes, joined bands of professional robbers. The constant state of war between the various states and the absence of regular troops, gave occupation to an en-

tire class of different nationalities known under the name of "Pindarees," men who, being well armed and mounted, sought their fortunes by means of their swords and who entered the paid army of one or another of the rajahs. On their tough little ponies these bands could cover almost incredible distances in the twenty-four hours, keeping up their horses' strength in extreme cases by large doses of opium. These Pindarees, in the shape of hired cavalry, were noted for their unrivalled cruelty. They would ruthlessly plunder, murder and torture the peaceful citizens of the countries against which they were fighting. In times of peace, from lack of occupation, these Pindarees formed bands of highway robbers.

Aside from these were also bands of Gussoons, or Gusseins, who lived exclusively by plunder.

About 1816 the number and strength of the Pindaree bands became so great that their raids extended to Madras and Bombay. One of the most famous chiefs of these bands was one Ameer Khan, who had under his command as many as 20,000 horse and foot.

As the Pindarees were nearly always on good terms with the native rulers, the English were obliged to fit out an army of 120,000 men to subjugate them. Ameer Khan disbanded his men and settled down to a respectable life, for which he received a small principality.

During the sway of the Pindarees the agricultural class suffered as well as the merchants and travellers. They were obliged, while working in the fields, to keep a watch set and to drive their cattle at night into a protected place in the middle of the villages. Sometimes they were forced to buy their safety by the payment of yearly sums to bands of Pindarees who undertook to protect them from others of the same class.

Travelling was very dangerous, as there were few highways and the East India Company was only just be-

ginning to build some strategic cart roads. The rest of the country had nothing but foot-paths over which loaded animals could pass. These roads led over steep mountain passes, through thick jungles or along river beds with overhanging precipitous sides; in a word, they formed ideal hiding places for robbers and refugees from pursuit. Travellers, therefore, joined in bands, for mutual safety, riding on horses, mules and donkeys. These animals were usually hired and the owner accompanied them on foot. From twenty to thirty miles were made in the twenty-four hours, the caravan for economy's sake avoiding camping in large towns, choosing in preference villages or some spot off the road. These circumstances were seized upon by the Thugs, who joined such caravans as porters, won the confidence of its members and, when opportunity offered, strangled and robbed them, afterwards dividing the spoils. The disappearance in this way of even entire caravans was not soon known owing to the slow means of communication and absence of posts. The fact of the caravans avoiding towns made it difficult to trace them, and the relatives of the missing ones submitted to their loss, attributing it to the troubled times, Pindarees, etc. The fact of the country being divided among so many rulers, the existence of various tongues, nationalities and castes, all facilitated the task of the Thugs and made it possible for them to carry on their organisation unpunished and unknown and to increase their horrid profession. The plunder that they obtained was very great. Owing to the absence of banks and posts money and valuables had to be carried with one or sent by trusty messengers, who often, in the disguise of a poor man, joined the caravan. The assembling of such a party seldom escaped, however, the sharp eyes of the Thugs in spite of the disguises.

The name Thug is derived from the verb "tukhna,"

"to deceive." This was the name the natives gave to the sect that owed its existence to deception in various forms. The Thugs, however, called themselves "Buhottees," or "stranglers."

The origin of this sect was by a perversion of the doctrine of the trinity, "Trimurti."

This trinity proceeded from the one great Brahma, that is one and yet three; Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver and Siva the destroyer. Brahma is therefore generally represented as having three heads, one in the middle and one on each side, facing the right and left. Although the doctrine of one great God as represented by Brahma is accepted, it does not interfere with the popular adoration of one individual member of this triune God; this is especially observed by the humbler castes.

Siva is by them worshipped as the most dreaded of the three, and a God whose anger is to be appeased by continual sacrifices and offerings. But these gods paved the way for a series of goddesses, as Sarasvati, the goddess of eloquence and of learning; the wife of Vishnu, Lakshmi, the goddess of beauty and of happiness, and of Siva, Kalee or Bhowanee, the goddess of blood, death and destruction. It is this goddess whom the Thugs worshipped and regarded as their protector.

The conception of Kali, as expressed in the worship was extremely repulsive; she was the goddess of cholera, plague and other epidemics, and to appease her wrath sacrifices were offered of animals in modern times, but formerly even human sacrifices were deemed necessary. These human sacrifices, which were pleasing to Kali, did not conflict with the will of Brahma the Creator, as death itself was the precursor of a new life.

The Thugs themselves give the following explanation of their origin:

The principles of creation and destruction worked in harmony, though having contradictory aims. The powers of creation, however, became greater than those of destruction and the earth soon became too populous. In order to establish an equilibrium in the growth and decrease of the population, Kali permitted her followers to use all means possible to this end. Departing from her rôle as destroyer, she, for the first and only time, created a being to which she gave life. Then, gathering together her followers, she explained to them a certain manner of causing death, illustrating her design by strangling in their presence the being that she had created. As a reward for thus helping to check the undesirable increase of the population of the world, she allowed her followers to enjoy the property of their victims. To show her approval, she gave special facility and skill to her disciples and took upon herself the task of making the bodies of the victims vanish. This convenient state of things existed until some inquisitive Thugs, moved by an overpowering desire to know what became of the bodies, decided to try to discover where they disappeared. The all-seeing goddess, reading their designs, in token of her displeasure announced that in future they would have to look out for themelves in the hiding of all bodies. She, however, continued to protect them and promised that all murders committed in her name should remain undiscovered. Certain rites had to be performed in connection with each killing, and when anything went wrong or they were discovered, the cause was traced to some carelessness in observing omens, or the overlooking of some rite, thereby drawing upon themselves the anger of their goddess, who had, in consequence, withheld her blessing and aid.

Owing to their secret organisation and the deftness with which their work was carried out, the Thugs were

very seldom caught in the old lawless days. When such a thing happened, however, death was the sentence, and the execution of a Thug was usually performed in a certain manner. The man was bound to the feet of an elephant, who was driven through the principal streets of the town, trampling the bound Thug under his huge feet at every step.

The Thugs were, of necessity, very careful whom they admitted to their sect. Fathers generally had their sons follow the same calling, initiating them only when grown up, and if the boy showed himself to be a promising candidate. Otherwise the families of Thugs seldom, if ever, shared the secret or suspected the real profession of their fathers or husbands. It was much easier in those days to keep the secret than it would seem at first glance. The Thugs belonged to members of various social classes, professions and castes and even religions, but both Mohammedans and Hindus joined in the common worship of Kali. In the cool season, when people travel with greater ease, they, too, under one pretext or another, would go off and be absent for two or three months on "business" or for pleasure, as seemed the easiest explanation, and then return as any other honest citizen would do.

In spite of the horrible profession they carried on, the Thugs were remarkably tender in their family ties. The British Government was aware of this and profited by it in the campaign they eventually carried on against this sect. When a recognised Thug escaped, they simply kept watch on his house, sure that sooner or later the Thug would be drawn to his home in spite of the danger awaiting him. When under sentence of death, which they met calmly, their one desire was to take leave of those near and dear to them, and very touching scenes are reported as taking place between these men of blood and their families.

BIRDS-EYE VIEW OF KERBELA

The ceremony of initiation into the community of Thugs was as follows: The candidate was first carefully instructed as to the duties and beliefs of the sect and sworn to the most profound secrecy. After performing certain ablutions and dressing in clean garments he was led to a secret place where a party of Thugs, with a religious leader, or Guroo, awaited him. On a white cloth was laid a spade, the symbol of the Thugs. Here the candidate was questioned as to his voluntary entrance into their band, and on receiving an affirmative reply, all rose, and the Guroo, lifting his hands, made the following prayer: "Oh, Bhowanee, mother of the world! We, thy faithful followers, pray thee to receive this thy servant and give to him a sign of thy blessing and to us a sign to confirm it." Then followed certain rites in which they hoped to find an omen to prove to them that the initiation had met with the approval of their goddess. These omens were of the greatest importance in the life of the Thugs. They were mostly sought in the signs of the jungle about them, and throughout the right side was considered lucky and the left unlucky, as, for instance, the cry of one and the same bird or beast, or first glimpse of the moon, could be interpreted as being propitious or otherwise to the undertaking according as heard or seen on the right or left side. After the approving omen had been obtained, the sacred spade was brought to the candidate, who, taking it in his hand, raised it towards the sky and pronounced his solemn oath. The oath included absolute secrecy and devotion to the band, and the promise to seek the life of every lawful being to bring as a sacrifice to his deity. A bit of sugar called gur was then given to him and he was pronounced to be a Thug. He was then handed over to one of the most skilful stranglers for lessons in the art of strangling, and before his first killing a special ceremony was again performed, dur-

ing which he first underwent a five days' fast, then, after an approving omen had been obtained, he was given the fateful handkerchief and spade, and after his first successful case he was called a Buhottee or strangler.

Naturally secrecy was the fundamental condition of membership. The betrayal of the oath was followed not only by the death of the unfaithful Thug, but all those to whom information had been imparted were, if possible, also strangled.

But the Thugs had not permission to kill all classes of people. The exceptions were washermen (the laundry work in India is done exclusively by men), sweepers, carpenters, fakirs, sellers of vegetables, dancers, lepers and finally Sikhs. The latter are the fighting clan of India par excellence, and as such were considered as in a way pursuing the same aims as those of the Thugs. They are the dominating people in the Punjab and most faithful to the British Government. There are at present a number of battalions formed entirely of Sikhs, and other mixed battalions in the composition of which they form a large majority.

Women were never killed if it was possible to avoid it, the deity of the sect being herself a woman. The exceptions were when women were witnesses to the killing of the men of their party, or if a wife or sister of a Thug had suspicions as to his profession.

With what coldbloodedness these murders were performed was strongly brought out by the testimony of the Thugs who were brought for trial by the English. I shall quote the account as given by one of these prisoners. "On our way to Dorego we met three Brahmins together with a fakir who was mounted on a miserable horse. The latter was all smeared with sugar to attract the flies, that were swarming all over him. We drove off the fakir and killed the Brahmins. Coming out of Dorego we

again met the fakir, who joined our party. On the way we met seven travellers who were going from Bombay to Nagpur. We drove the fakir off with stones and killed the seven. The next morning we again met the fakir and again let him go. Later we met two Kachins and a Sepoy, and on inveigling them to the place where we had intended killing them, we again found our fakir! Losing our patience at last, we paid one of our number five rupees to kill him, taking the sin upon ourselves. We strangled the three and with them the fakir, upon whom we found 30 pounds of coral and 350 strings of small and 15 of large pearls, also a gold necklace."

After each successful enterprise a service of thanksgiving to Bhowanee was held. All sat on the ground with their faces towards the west. The presiding Guroo dug a small hole and near it spread a handkerchief, on which were placed the sacred spade, sugar and a silver coin. The Guroo then pronounced the following prayer: "Almighty Ruler, thou who dost protect thy followers and givest them one lak and 60,000 rupees, we pray thee to continue thy protection and to fulfil our desires."

The spade was then sprinkled with water and the hole also filled with the same fluid. In deep silence all present then ate the sugar and drunk the water from the hole.

The duties of the various members of the band were strictly defined. The captain bore the title djemadar—colonel. Then came the Suttaes, or decoyers. Those were chosen from among the most eloquent and plausible of the band, and their duty was to go about seeking for desirable victims and then to decoy them into the company of the Thugs, generally under the pretext of travelling together for greater safety. Great skill and tact was needed to persuade them, without exciting suspicion, into joining the company. Another division was that of grave-diggers, who prepared the common grave in which all

the victims were buried; and the third were the stranglers. This operation was performed in the way first taught the Thugs by Bhowanee or Kali herself. A large strong handkerchief was taken and into one corner of it a coin, generally a rupee, was tied. The corner with the money was taken in the left hand and the right hand grasped the handkerchief at a distance from the left hand corresponding to the approximate size of the neck. The handkerchief was thrown from behind and drawn together in such a way that the rupee came at the back of the neck just over the spinal cord. One twist of the skilful hands and death was instantaneous, the victim never having time to utter a cry.

The order of proceedings was generally as follows: The decoyers having done their work, and the victims being already in the caravan of the Thugs, the grave-diggers went ahead to find a suitable spot for safely concealing the bodies. When the chosen place was reached, at a given signal from the djemadar, each Buhottee, who had already contrived to be near the victim allotted to him, threw his handkerchief and the terrible deed was done. The grave-diggers then quickly took up the bodies and carried them to the already prepared grave. These were generally in the depths of a jungle or in an impassable ravine, or sometimes in the spot where the camp was to be, the tents were pitched over the newly-smoothed graves and the Thugs calmly slept over the victims who had been their confiding fellow travellers. A deep gash was made in the abdomen of each body to prevent the swelling that might disturb the form of the grave, and strong stakes were driven through them, pinning them to the earth. This was done so that in case, after all other precautions, wild beasts should open the graves, they would not be able to drag the bodies out into view. The grave was then carefully filled and made to look as

natural as possible and all tracks leading to it concealed. Or if such a place was not to be found, the camp was made to stand over the graves, and the traces of a camp were all that were left to mark the spot. If, during the work, anyone happened to pass by, his fate was the same, no mercy being then shown to the unhappy witness of the deed, be it woman, child or member of the castes whose death was prohibited.

In later years, when the English were actively pursuing Thugs, graves were discovered in which forty or more bodies were found, forming a sight so terrible that the strongest nerves were shaken.

It would take pages to tell of all the ingenious devices and disguises adopted by the Thugs in carrying out their designs. They passed themselves off sometimes as merchants, or as travellers returning to their home; as soldiers in the employ of one or another rajah. Sometimes they killed according to well-laid plans, making their victims rise at an earlier hour than usual in order to reach the spot chosen at a convenient time. To do this they profited by the customs of the people with whom they travelled. In the absence of watches, caravans often made their move in the morning when the birds first began to twitter. The Thugs, therefore, would either imitate these sounds, or, creeping up a tree, would shake the branches and excite the birds to chirp and twitter before the hour, thus making these innocent birds, who are created to charm and please, the unconscious messengers of death to the sleeping travellers. At other times they took advantage of the confusion caused by climbing a steep narrow ravine, or in fording a stream: or again unexpectedly, if a favourable moment presented itself, the dejemadar would give his sinister signal.

The Thugs had a secret jargon of their own by which they could recognise members of their own sect, give in-

structions or warnings, while seemingly carrying on an ordinary conversation.

For many long years the Thugs carried on their infernal trade, unpunished with very few exceptions, and undiscovered.

In 1810, however, the attention of the English was called to the mysterious disappearance of a number of native soldiers. The investigations made, though without leading to any practical results, awakened a strong suspicion that the men had fallen into the hands of Thugs.

Secret instructions were given throughout the army and police force for vigilance in this direction. In 1812 the disappearance of an officer brought about a more active campaign, which resulted in the discovery of the workings of several bands of Thugs. It was found that this sect had for many years paid a tribute to the rulers of Sind to obtain their protection, or, at least, non-interference. It was also discovered that the men of whole villages were in some instances of this cult. Expeditions were formed, and the Thugs became scattered all over India. After this disbanding, the British Government took no further steps between 1816 and 1830. In the latter year, however, organised bands were again found to be working in the districts of Malwee and Bundelkund, and then the English decided to crush them once for all.

A special department in the administration was formed to study the secret organisations of the Thugs. At the head of this department was an energetic English officer with seven aides. His report was published in Calcutta in 1840, showing that he had succeeded in arresting one of the chief leaders of the Thugs, a Hindu, Ferengi by name, who betrayed all his companions and even showed the graves of their victims. Two hundred and seventy-four burying places were found, in one enor-

mous grave 100 bodies being counted. These 274 burying places were along a roadside for a distance of 1,400 miles, and were to be found on an average five miles from each other.

After such information many Thugs were caught and all were sentenced to be hanged. Commutation of the death sentence to that of imprisonment for life was made in cases where a Thug gave evidence that would lead to the arrest of other bands.

Little by little, before the horrified eyes of the English, the terrible picture was unfolded, betraying in all its details the naked facts connected with the crimes that had been committed unknown in their very midst. As the trials went on, fresh arrests were constantly made and new graves opened to prove the truth of the testimony given. From all parts of India word came of existing bands, and in the end it was found that there was not a province in the land that had escaped this scourge. Among those bands were found people of every profession and social condition. The governor general of India, Lord William Bentinck, and his council then took the matter up. Native rulers were made to deliver over all Thugs known to them and to undertake to cease protecting them in future. Along all the principal highways guards were placed at intervals as deemed necessary. Owing to these measures, we find in the report of Colonel Meadows-Taylor that between the year 1831 and 1837, inclusively, 3,266 Thugs were arrested, and almost all met the fate they so well deserved. Aside from the above number there were 1,800 Thugs known by name, but whom the government was unable to catch.

What colossal figures represent the numbers who perished at the hands of these bands is shown by the confessions of one of the Thugs, a Mohammedan, Fetti Khan, who in twenty years himself strangled 508 persons. An-

other Thug during his forty years' career as a Thug killed 931. In one "season" a band of six Thugs strangled 210 victims!

It further came to light that the Thugs operated all along the Ganges, where they acted as boatmen for ferrying pilgrims across to sacred spots.

In conclusion the question presents itself as to which of the theories mentioned at the beginning of the chapter as to the origin of the Thugs is the most correct. Were they a religious sect, strictly working according to a religious belief; or were they a band of highwaymen carrying on their nefarious trade under the banner of a religious sect? My own opinion is that the sect was originally started on a strictly religious basis, but that gradually the immense material gain drew followers who were attracted by the loot to be gained, and that finally the majority of Thugs were little influenced by religious impulse. As a proof of this theory is the fact that among the Thugs in later years many Moslems were to be found to whom taking of life is strictly forbidden. Another view brought out was that it was a kind of sport. One of the Thugs under examination cynically remarked, "You English are devoted to a sport, you risk your lives in hunting tigers, panthers and buffaloes, and yet our profession is higher than yours; we hunt a nobler game, man!"

The measures taken by the English in improving means of communication, ensuring order and safety, and the changes wrought in the elevation of the morals and views of the people, all helped to bring about the desired result. In the sixties the Thugs were suppressed, and now the tales of their dark deeds remain only as things of the past.

Unfortunately our stay in India was short and came to an end just as we felt we were beginning to appreciate

the nameless charm of that unrivalled land. "Shall we ever revisit this interesting country?" was the thought that came to us as we went on board the steamer bound for Egypt, that would stop at only two places of interest to the Moslem world, Jiddah, the port for the pilgrim to Mecca, and Yambu, for those bound to Medina.

We found ourselves again in the Indian Ocean, and the familiar ship life began, with its usual recreations, discussions as to the state of the barometer and the day's run, and the interest aroused by every ship met. And as the long, uneventful days went by we welcomed the excitement of passing Perim, a small island of some fourteen square miles, in the straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, which, though small, possess considerable strategic interest. Coming abreast of the island the steamer dipped her flag, as all English ships do, and among the passengers was to be heard the singing of some couplets commemorating an English political officer who for years sent his reports and was supposed to live on this dreary spot while in fact enjoying the delights of England, from which place his reports were sent to be remailed from Perim.

At least so the ditty, that in duty bound was at that time always chanted on the decks of passing steamers, affirmed. Here, too, we heard the details of the occupation of the island by the British. As far back as 1799 the British had kept an eye on the strategical advantages of this little bit of land, but they did not formally possess themselves of it then.

More than half a century passed when the French Government, looking about for a coaling station, had its attention drawn to this convenient island. With secret orders a man-of-war was sent in 1857 to occupy Perim and raise the French flag. But the English were not easily taken in. When the French ships entered Aden the English governor gave a dinner in honour of the

French officers. Owing to the indiscretion of a young French ensign in talking with an English lady, the secret leaked out, with the result that when, on the next day, the French arrived at Perim, they found to their chagrin the English jack already flying there.

We anchored off Aden, the southern key to the Red Sea, lying 1,650 miles from Bombay and 1,300 from Suez. The city is on an oval-shaped peninsula that is connected with the main land by a narrow neck. The city lies just opposite to the fortified island of Sirah and is, together with the island of Perim, under the government of Bombay. Aden was known to the ancients, but its importance varied with the successive periods. As the port for the commerce of all the Arabian peninsula the Romans occupying Egypt regarded it as a rival to their monopoly of the Indian trade, and therefore demolished it. But, owing to its geographical position, Aden again rose in the eleventh century, and in the sixteenth century we find it the chief connecting link between Eastern and Western trade. In 1513 Albuquerque made an ineffectual attempt to take Aden, but in 1537 it fell into the hands of Sultan Solyman II.

With the opening of the Cape route as a channel for commercial communication the importance of Aden rapidly fell, and in the nineteenth century it could not claim more than 800 inhabitants. Chance led to the English occupying this important point. In 1863 the crew of a ship wrecked near Aden were robbed by the Coast Arabs. The English demanded compensation, but as their negotiations led to no result, they occupied Aden by force on the 19th January, 1869. From this time Aden became not only a point of strategical value, but, with the opening of the Suez Canal, its old commercial importance revived, and the addition of Perim gave the English the key to the Red Sea.

At the present time the population of Aden is about 40,000, made up of many nationalities. Its imports amount to as much as three million pounds sterling yearly, and its exports, coffee, gum, ivory, pearls and ostrich feathers, to two and a half million pounds.

Although it was October, the heat was considerable. The city, notwithstanding the many improvements introduced by the English, is dreary and unattractive. We, however, wasted little time there, for as soon as we had taken in the coal we needed, and swallowed at the same time the usual amount of dust, we proceeded on our way to Jiddah.

CHAPTER XIV

MECCA, THE MOSLEM'S PALESTINE

Pilgrimages and their Significance—The Supremacy of Mecca as a Sacred Spot—Christian Travellers who Have Visited Mecca—Ancient Cult of the Kaaba—Cause of Accepting Such a Cult—Mohammed's View of Pilgrimages to Mecca—Foundation of Mecca and the Kaaba—Stone of Abraham—Divine Origin of the "Black Stone"—Spring of "Zem Zem"—Golden Water Trough—Sacred Places Situated near the Kaaba—Conditions under which Pilgrimages May be Made—Pilgrimages of Women and by Proxy—Appearance of Hadj—"Ihram"—Day of Doubt, Day of Knowledge, Day of Sacrifice—Rites Connected with these Days—Mena, Arafat—Stoning the Devil—Fête of Kurban Bairam—Day of Drying Meat in the Sun—Why Mohammedans are Advised to Leave Mecca upon the Completion of their Obligatory Rites—Population of Mecca—Causes of Mortality among Pilgrims—Sanitary Condition of Mecca during the Hadj of 1907—Prevalent Diseases and their Causes—Unfavourable Conditions for Carrying Bodies by Sea—Quarantines.

A PILGRIMAGE to Mecca is the highest aspiration of every Mohammedan, and it is therefore necessary to dwell with some detail on this phase of Moslem life. To understand the principles underlying the idea of pilgrimage we must glance at the origin of Mecca, the reason for worshipping the Kaaba and the black stone, as well as define the connection between the ancient idolaters and Mohammedans. One must also understand why Mecca obtained the predominant position as a sacred city, receiving the palm of pre-eminence even above Medina, although the Prophet had lived in the latter place and it became the first seat of the caliphs.

The epithets used by Mohammedans in describing

Mecca show the importance this place has in their eyes. There is a list of these epithets, forming quite a book. The titles most used are "Mukadass," "sacred," "Mukerremeh," "holy," "Belad-ul-Emin," "metropolis." The sacredness of the city is so great that the Mohammedans claim that no bird except the dove, which is held to be sacred, dares to alight on the roof of the chief mosque. Not only Mecca itself but the land about for three days' march is held to be sacred, and no unbeliever to the present time is allowed, under pain of death, to defile with his presence this holy ground. The restriction is of very early date, originating with the Caliph Omar, who drove out of Mecca and Medina all Christians, Jews and idolaters. For this reason there can be no consuls at any of these places, and it was only in the seventies of the past century that consuls were sent to Jiddah, the port of Mecca, and even then an attempt was made by fanatics to massacre these European representatives. The Christians, who in one disguise or another have visited Mecca, are very few. The first on record was Ludovico de Varthema, in 1503, then Joseph Pitts, who, becoming a slave, went there with his master, in 1680. In the nineteenth century the number of Christians who succeeded in reaching the sacred city includes Fenatti, a deserter, who, in 1805, passed in under the name of Mohammed. Two years later Badia, a Spaniard, obtained entrance; in 1809, Seetzen; in 1811, Burckhardt; Rosh in 1812; and Burton, who, in 1853, made his most interesting pilgrimage.

The reason for giving Mecca the predominance over Medina is to be found in the fact that while Mohammed preached a new religion, he was obliged to have regard for the beliefs and political conditions of the time. Among these was the cult of the Kaaba, supposed to be of divine origin, the black stone and the spring of "Zem Zem," as well as other holy places of ancient days.

In Mohammed's time the Arabian peninsula presented something like a federation of republics. Each tribe was almost independent in its internal government, uniting only in matters of common interest, such as the declaration of war, etc. But even at this time Mecca had a predominant position, owing to the possession of the Kaaba, the black stone, and the well of Zem Zem, which was revered by all. The government of Mecca was in the hands of a kind of Council of Six and later of Ten members of the Koreish tribe. The members of this council were called Shereefs, nobles, princes, and at the death of a member his place was occupied by the next in age in the tribe.

Mohammed's eloquent teachings soon drew to him followers, and depending upon these the Prophet undertook to spread his religion by the sword. After his flight from Mecca Mohammed settled in Medina, and only after eight years, when he had a sufficiently strong force, did he march with 10,000 followers in the eighth year of the hegira upon Mecca, the key of Arabia.

Being divided by internal differences Mecca was unable to make a stand, and Mohammed occupied the city with little difficulty, entering it more as a protector and well-wisher than as a conqueror. Having received the key and the sacred Kaaba on January 22d, 630 of our era, he mounted his camel and rode seven times around the Kaaba and the black stone, before which, with his "mekdjin," or sceptre, in his hand, he bowed in worship. Then, entering the Kaaba, he threw down all the idols contained therein, including one dedicated to Abraham, and to which was ascribed a divine origin. That day the Kaaba was dedicated to the One God, and as a memorial, but only as such, to the patriarchs Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and others.

The following year we find Mohammed ordaining pil-

grimages as obligatory to his followers. He ordered all the inhabitants of Medina to perform a Hadj, and sent Abu-Bekr, with the title of "Emir-el-Hadj," at the head of an immense caravan. This title was given later on by the sultans of Turkey to the leader of the so-called "sacred caravan" carrying each year the gifts of the sultan to Mecca.

Finally, again in 632 Mohammed, himself at the head of 114,000 pilgrims, set out for Mecca, taking with him his wives and relatives. Here he fulfilled all the ancient ceremonies and then added others, to which he gave his explanations. At this time he settled the period for the great Hadj, or Hajj, so as to coincide with the fête of Kurban Bairam, the 10th Zelhadjie. Soon after his return from the pilgrimage the Great Prophet died in Medina. And so we see that while founding a new religion Mohammed took into consideration the traditions and religions of those about him, heathen, Christian and Jewish, and gave them his own interpretation. More than this, he made it obligatory for his followers to make pilgrimages to places long considered sacred by idolaters, commanding all true believers who have the means to do so to visit Mecca. In the 22d Sura it says, "And proclaim unto the people a solemn pilgrimage, let them come unto thee on foot, and on every lean camel arriving from every distant road; that they may be witnesses of the advantages which accrue to them from the visiting this holy place." Every true Moslem makes it his aim to make at least once in his life the pilgrimage to Mecca, and in passing, but only in passing, to worship also in Medina. Those who cannot go themselves and have the means, hire someone to perform the Hadj for them. As the distances travelled by Moslems in performing their pilgrimages are very great, coming as they do from India, China and Kazan, and the expense being correspondingly

heavy, one might infer that only the rich would be able to accomplish it. As a matter of fact, however, even the poor are found among the pilgrims spending the last cent that they have for years hoarded up for this purpose.

Others get the means for making the pilgrimage in dishonest ways, hoping the sin will be forgiven in view of the motive. I have personally known of several cases when pilgrimages were performed in this way on money stolen for the purpose, and two cases when the murder of unbelievers furnished the means. Killing an unbeliever is not considered to be as heavy a crime as the murder of a Mohammedan, as we shall see in the chapter on the price of blood.

The above brief survey of the history of pilgrimages explains the great flood of Mohammedans that annually pours into Mecca from every part of the Moslem world. According to tradition the number of pilgrims gathered in Mecca for the Kurban Bairam cannot be less than 70,000 each year, as that is the number ordained by Heaven. In fact, however, there are years when the number mounts to 300,000, especially in the years when the Bairam falls on a Friday, when according to Mohammedan belief based on the Koran, this one Hadj equals seventy ordinary pilgrimages.

In earlier days, before the cutting of the Suez Canal, the pilgrim routes were five: first, through the Sinai peninsula; secondly, by way of Damascus, the route now followed by the "sacred caravan"; thirdly, by way of the Yemen; fourthly, through Muscat; and fifthly, through Mesopotamia. Since the opening of the Suez route the Mohammedans prefer the sea voyage, and only those who wish to include Kerbela and Nedjef in their pilgrimage follow the old route through Nejd. Pilgrims from India go in English steamers, and the same means are often chosen by those coming from the south

COURT OF MOSQUE OF SHEIKH ABDUL KADIR

of Persia and from the eastern part of our Central Asiatic Provinces. A very large number of pilgrims from Russia, Tartars, Sarts, Kirghiz, Bukhariots, Turkomans, Ocetines and some Persians go by way of the Black Sea. Of these, two-thirds return from Jiddah, the port of Mecca, and one-third from Yambu, the port of Medina, according to which of the sacred cities they visited last.

The Mohammedan traditions give the following explanation of the origin of the Kaaba and of Mecca:

Abraham, fearing the persecutions of Nimrod, fled, together with his wife, Sarah, who was also his half-sister, to Egypt. The reigning Pharaoh, on seeing Sarah, who was exceedingly fair, became enamoured of her, but the instant he touched her his hand became withered and an invisible power threw him to the ground. Taking pity on the king's entreaties, Sarah prayed God for his forgiveness, and her prayers being answered, Pharaoh's hand became as before. As a thank-offering for her intercession, he presented Sarah with a very beautiful slave, Hagar. Sarah, having no children, gave this slave to her husband, praying at the same time that they might have children. This prayer was heard, and Hagar bore a son whom they named Ishmael. Soon after, jealousy arose between Hagar and Sarah, to whom in the meantime a son had also been born, and Abraham, losing patience, took Hagar and her son into the desert of Arabia and left them on the very spot where the city of Mecca was afterwards built. Their water giving out, Hagar and Ishmael wandered a long time in the desert searching in vain for a well. When nearly exhausted, the angel Gabriel appeared and alighted on the spot where is to-day the well of Zem Zem. He waved his wings and a spring of water immediately appeared, which is to-day one of the chief objects of veneration in Mecca. Drawn by the water, birds began to flock about the well, and the

inhabitants of Yemen, noticing it, came to seek the cause. Finding that there was water, they, with the consent of Hagar, settled there. Eventually Ishmael married the daughter of Megas-ibn-Amr, who was the chief of that tribe and the founder of Mecca.

In later years Abraham came to see his son. Here he was welcomed by his former wife and settled down with them there, and built in Mecca the Kaaba as a temple for the worship of the One God. Working on the Kaaba, Abraham employed, instead of a ladder, a stone called the "happy stone." This stone is pointed out to-day on the spot called "Makaami Ibrahim," and is visited by all pilgrims. The Kaaba, as built by Abraham, was, however, according to Mohammedan tradition, the fourth. The first Kaaba was created by God before the creation of the world, the second was built by Adam, the third by Seth. Then after Abraham the Kaaba was rebuilt by Amalek, the descendant of Shem; the sixth time it was built in the beginning of the Christian era by the tribe of Beni Djugash; the seventh time by Kucalmbin-Kullab, the great-great-grandfather of Mohammed, but this Kaaba was destroyed by fire and in its place an eighth temple was erected when the Prophet was twenty-four years old. This Kaaba was also injured by fire, and, therefore, in the 64th year of the hegira a ninth building was raised by Hadjad-bin-Yousif. In the year 1005 of the hegira a part of the building was destroyed by flood, and again work was begun which continued ten years, completing the Kaaba as we now see it, leaving, however, a part of the old building of 64 H. This, at least, is the most popular account of the origin of the Kaaba.

With regard to the "black stone" the same Mohammedan sources give the following details:

One day when Abraham was walking through the

Wady Nauman, the site of the present Mecca, the angel Gabriel touched him on the shoulder and stopped him. At the touch a legion of formless beings sprang from the body of the patriarch; these were his future descendants, the whole of posterity. The spirits divided themselves into two groups, on the right and left sides of Abraham. The first group formed those who were to be Mohammedans, the second those of various other religions. Then God appeared in a cloud and asked the spirits if they accepted him as the one God, to which, as one voice, came the answer, "Labbayka Allahouma," "I am here, ready to serve Thee, my God." This exclamation forms the subject for the prayer called "Telbiet," one of the most important of those repeated by the pilgrims. Basing their belief on this tradition, the Mohammedans claim that every human being is born a Moslem, and afterwards may or may not become the follower of some other faith.

After this God gave his commandments in a secret writing inscribed upon a black stone, that Adam had taken with him when driven out of Eden. This stone was taken by the Almighty to the mountain of Djabel-abi-Kubeiess, and later on given, through his angel Gabriel, to Abraham while the latter was building the Kaaba, commanding him to place it in the southwest corner of the Kaaba, to indicate the spot from which pilgrims were to begin their ceremonies.

This is the explanation given for the deep veneration with which this stone is regarded by all true believers. Their consternation and woe may therefore be understood when in the tenth century, during a civil war, this sacred stone was carried off by the tribe of Karamat, who were at war with the Mohammedan tribes. It was only after a lapse of twenty-two years that the stone was returned to its place.

In 1023 A.D. the Mohammedan world was again thrown into excitement, this time by a case of unheard-of blasphemy.

As a religious procession passed around the Kaaba to kiss this stone a fanatic sprang out from the crowd and struck the sacred relic three times with an iron weapon that he carried, crying, "How long will this black stone, Mohammed, and Ali, be the objects of our worship? Let us pull down the temple and under its ruins bury Mohammedanism!" The infuriated multitude fell upon the blasphemer and literally tore him to pieces and burned his remains. A stringent search was made, but in spite of tortures and executions, the identity of the unknown person was never discovered. The heavy blows had cracked the stone and the injury is now repaired by a band of silver.

To the sacred places in Mecca must be added the well of Zem Zem, above mentioned.

Finally, a fourth object of worship must be noted, namely, the Myzab, or water spout, said to be of pure gold, made to carry off the rain from the flat roof of the Kaaba. This water is considered as holy, and during the rains the inhabitants of the town rush to wash in it and to collect a supply. When the pilgrimages take place in the rainy season, this spout is the cause of many fatal accidents, as the pilgrims, numbering sometimes over 200,000, in their frantic attempts to get a few drops of this sacred water, crowd and throw each other down, so that the successful ones often get to their object over the bodies of their fellow pilgrims.

The Kaaba is situated almost in the centre of a large court or square that is 250 by 210 paces in size. The court is surrounded by a gallery of four rows of columns, of which every four columns are capped by a dome; in this way the gallery is formed by four rows of columns connected and covered by domes to the number of 150. This

gallery, built by Selim II., forms a mosque known as the Mosque of the Shereefs. Raised paved paths lead from this gallery to the Kaaba. The Kaaba itself is a massive building 18 paces long by 14 wide, and rises to a height of 40 feet. As the roof is flat the edifice presents the form of a cube. The only door, which is studded with silver, is on the north side, and is about seven feet from the ground, so that a ladder has to be placed to enter it when the door is opened, which is done but two or three times each year. The entrance is lighted at night by wax candles, and censers of sweet-smelling incense are placed there. Over the entire building is thrown a black silk covering, the gift of the sultan, the honour of sending which was long the object of contention between the rulers of the East. At the northeast corner of the Kaaba is the black stone, an irregular oval, about seven inches in diameter. It appears to be composed of small stones of various sizes set in cement and kept together by a silver band. The surface of the stone is smoothly polished by the kisses of the millions of pilgrims, and is of a dark brown, almost black colour. The Mohammedans say it was originally white, but became black from the kisses of sinful pilgrims.

Near the Kaaba is a small hollow, lined with marble, where Abraham and his son Ishmael mixed the cement for the building of the Kaaba, and here also it is considered meritorious to pray. Among other special places of veneration are the tombs of Ishmael and his mother, Hagar.

The idea of covering the Kaaba, which dates from pre-Moslem times, possibly arose from the metaphors often used in ancient times in describing it as "the bride," as is found in Arab poetry. The same comparison is traced in the fact of eunuchs being chosen as its guardians. The covering is called the "Kesvieh-Shereef," sacred covering. In the early years of the Mohammedan era this

covering was changed once a year and later on twice—on the 10th of Muharram and the 8th of Zelhadjie—a day before the eve of Kurban Bairam. Under the Abbassides the covering was changed three times a year.

For a long time the privilege of furnishing the covering was contested between the rulers of the Yemen and Egypt, until in 1283 A.D. the then sultan of Egypt, Melek Kalavun, obtained the right. The desire to have this privilege was so great that the Eastern potentates were ready to obtain it by arms if necessary. The son of Timur, Shahruk, for instance, on receiving a refusal from the sultan of Egypt, to whom he appealed for permission to send a covering, sent an officer to Mecca who bribed the Shereef to allow him to cover the Kaaba in the name of his master. This led to an open rupture, and the Egyptians prepared for war, sending a special envoy to Murad II. asking for his aid. The death of the Egyptian ruler and the consequent internal troubles, however, prevented a war, and Shahruk carried out his determination and the Kaaba was covered with his gift. This rivalry was stopped, finally, by Selim I., who, after conquering Egypt, assumed the privilege of sending the covering for the Kaaba as his exclusive right, and this has continued down to our time, when the starting of the sacred caravan from Scutari has long been one of the interesting sights of Constantinople.

The covering is still made in Egypt, by the family of Beit-u-Sazdu. It is made of a stuff woven for the purpose with a border of verses from the Koran and the name of the reigning sultan written in very distinct characters, known as the "Tumar." On the arrival of the new covering, the old one is removed and cut into bits and sold at a great price to pilgrims. The larger pieces are purchased by mosques, to be used in the covering of the tomb of some celebrated person who may be buried

within its walls. The smaller pieces are bought by individuals and cherished as most sacred heirlooms. When the Kurban Bairam falls on a Friday, as it does every seventh year, the year of the "great" Hadj, or "Hadj-el-Akbar," the old covering of the Kaaba is sent to the sultan.

Near the Kaaba are four pavilions for the four chief Sunnite sects, the Shafey, Hanefy, Hanbaly and Maleky, where the respective religious leaders or imams teach the pilgrims the rites and ceremonies which must accompany their devotions. There is also a pavilion over the well Zem Zem in the form of an arch called "Babu-s-Salam." There are many smaller "stations," at each of which the pilgrims halt and repeat special prayers.

The expression pilgrimage, or "Hadj," as given in the Arabic, includes in its origin the conception of the desire or intention of performing an act the performance of which gives the right of entrance into Paradise. The very expression indicates that man is a passing traveller here and that his aim should be for something that would lead him on to something better, and the chief means of obtaining this is by visiting God's house in Mecca.

Much has been written by Mohammedan theologians as to the aims and obligations of pilgrimages, and while there are many conflicting opinions as to details, there are four principles upon which all agree:

1. Islam, being a Moslem.

2. Adolescence. If a pilgrimage be made by a minor, the act does not count and the pilgrimage must be repeated on reaching manhood.

3. A state of freedom. If, therefore, a slave, when accompanying his master, performs a pilgrimage and afterwards obtains freedom, the Hadj performed while in bondage is null and void.

4. Mental sanity.

To these four principles, acknowledged by all, some schools add the following four:

1. Possession of sufficient means to perform the journey after having paid all debts and left enough to support the family. This condition is very rarely observed. Many go into debt to obtain the money, or, as mentioned, resort to still more objectionable means; others make the entire Hadj on charity.

2. The possession of a beast of burden if the pilgrim lives at a greater distance than two days' march from Mecca.

3. Safety of the route. This condition is never observed, owing to the popular belief that the greater the dangers and hardships encountered, the greater will be the merit.

4. Possession of sufficient physical strength to walk two marches in case a riding beast is not owned.

Many other details have been the subject of hot discussions among theologians, as, for instance, if a Hadj is obligatory for the blind or maimed. Such controversies, as might be expected, end in an evasive decision.

As to women, they may perform a pilgrimage only when they are accompanied by husband or near relation, and this person is called "mahrem." He must be a person of reliable character and mature age. The journey expenses of such "mahrem" are borne by the lady. Some theologians consider the consent of the husband as indispensable; others hold that a woman may undertake it even in opposition to his wishes.

All commentators agree in considering pilgrimages performed by proxy as acceptable to God as regards the one who sends his representative, but it is not regarded as a Hadj for the person actually performing it. Pilgrimages by proxy are, however, only admissible to those unable to perform, personally, the journey, such as to one

who is an invalid. One undertaking a pilgrimage for another is known as "Mahmyr-be-l'-Hadj." Such a pilgrimage may be performed only at the expense of the one represented. A pilgrimage in the name of the dead is also admitted. If, on dying, special sums are not named for this object, it is possible for a son or friend to make the pilgrimage for the dead at his own expense.

Pilgrimages by proxy are very common, and under various pretexts are often resorted to by those having the means to hire another to go in his stead.

Every aid given to pilgrims is set down as a merit to the giver. For this reason the sultan gives steamers for the transport of pilgrims. In such ways do Oriental padishahs endeavour to make up for the failure on their part in complying with one of the most positive commands of the Prophet.

The Moslem religion distinguishes pilgrimages as being of three categories:

1. Umra, the lesser pilgrimage undertaken at any time of the year.

2. Hadj, that can be performed only at stated months and days of the Mohammedan calendar.

3. "Hadj-el-Akbar," the Great Hadj, when the day of Arafat falls on a Friday. For our purposes it will be sufficient to become acquainted with but one of these three forms.

The Hadj must take place in the month of Zelhadjie, the ceremony continuing for three days, the 8th, 9th and 10th, on which latter day is the "Eidu-l'-Kurban," the feast of sacrifices. Then follow three days, the 11th, 12th and 13th, known as the "Ayyum-el-Tashrik," or "the days of drying flesh in the sun," when the pilgrims dry mutton to serve as food on their return journey.

The details connected with the pilgrimages and rites to be performed at each station are very complicated and

exacting, the failure to observe which would mean the invalidation of the whole Hadj. To help the pilgrims, the majority of whom may be illiterate persons, who have perhaps spent their all on the pilgrimage, an offering is permitted of a sheep or camel, according to the gravity of the omission or mistake committed. The flesh of the sacrifice is divided among the poor. To render the pilgrimage effective the following forms must be observed:

First of all, on approaching Mecca the pilgrim must halt at a certain spot, according to the route taken, the common name for such a station being "mekat."

At the mekat the pilgrim, after prescribed prayers, cuts his nails, shaves his head and puts on the "ihram," or white attire, which is thrown over the shoulder and knotted on one side. The head is bare and no underlinen is worn. From this time he is forbidden to cut his nails or to kill any living creature, not even the parasites, which, in passing, it may be said, accompany the Hadj in generous numbers. After this toilette the pilgrims repeat prayers, that of the Telbiet Labbaya being most frequently repeated in the following words:

"Here I am! O Allah, here am I—
No partner hast thou, here am I;
Verily the praise and the beneficence are thine, and the kingdom—
No partner hast thou, here am I!"

Many pilgrims time their journey so as to be at the "mekat" (appointed spot) the 1st of the lunar month of Zilkade, and then the pilgrim wears the ihram nearly forty days, namely, until the 10th of the following month, Zelhadjie. The majority, however, in order to economise time, arrive some ten days before Kurban Bairam.

The three days of pilgrimage commemorate Abraham's sacrifice of his son Ishmael (not Isaac, as the Bible states).

On the 8th of Zelhadjie, according to the Moslem belief, Abraham first heard the voice from heaven commanding him to sacrifice his dearest.

All that day (bearing in mind that Mohammedan days begin at sunset) Abraham was in doubt as to the voice being that of God or of an evil spirit. This day is therefore known as "Yaum-t-Tarwiyah," or day of doubt. On the following day the voice being again heard, Abraham knew it was God's command, and this day, the 9th, is therefore known as "Yaum Arafaat," day of knowledge. Though convinced, Abraham waited one day more, and on the command being repeated, definitely decided to sacrifice Ishmael on the 10th day, called Eidul-Kurban," or feast of sacrifice.

Omitting the minor details of the devotions prescribed at the Kaaba and black stone, I shall pass to a general description of the ceremonials on the sacred days.

The day before the great 8th day the mullahs explain to the congregated pilgrims the sacredness and significance of the following days.

At sunrise on the morning of the 8th, after prayer, the pilgrims leave Mecca for Mina, a village about three miles from Mecca. This little village is of very great importance in the pilgrimage. The immense multitude, often of 200,000,[1] flows in a turbulent stream towards Mina. All are bareheaded, barefooted and clad only in the white ihram. Here one sees the richer Bedouins on camels or horseback, some pilgrims on mules or asses, others on foot; each tries to push ahead of his fellows, and the crowding is terrible. Often many of the old and infirm who have survived the fatigues and dangers of the

[1] In 1907, at the time of the Hadj, the pilgrims in Mecca were estimated to be 290,000, divided into the following groups: from Turkey, 113,000; Beluchistan, 12,000; India, 45,000; Rússia, 16,000; Persia, 15,000; Sudan, 13,000; Morocco, 17,000; Algiers and Tunis, 45,000, and from Afghanistan, 10,000.

long journey give out at last, unable to continue, and lie down by the roadside to die, comforting themselves at the last moment that their hour struck when they were on sacred ground. No one pays any attention to them, each being busy with his own religious duties.

From Mina to the mountain of Arafat, which the pilgrims must reach the same day, is about nine miles. Soon after leaving Mina, a place is passed called "Batu-el-Muhassir," the basin of the tempter, for here the devil tempted Adam, Abraham, and Ishmael. From this place the road leads to a mosque, "Muzdalefah," the place dedicated to religious ceremonials. Here the noon-day prayer is made, and then they continue their march to Arafat. Here tradition says that Adam found Eve, from whom he had been separated after their expulsion from the garden of Eden.

After devotions the pilgrims camp on the mountain side, tents are put up, improvised shops opened, and as far as one can see the ravine and slopes are covered with the multitude. As in the disorderly march many companions or members of the same family lose each other, they may be seen searching among the tents and calling with a loud voice to their fellows. One hears many women's names called, though it is not a Moslem custom to do so in public. "Oh, Fatima," "Oh, Zobeeda," "Oh, Zeinab," ring through the camp, and yet it is not a search for strayed women. It seems that women who are unable to make the pilgrimage often hire some one to call out their name on this great day, hoping thus to gain some merit.

The confusion, unavoidable with such great crowds, gives opportunities for crimes that are committed in spite of the sacredness of the time and place. Bedouins often come here seeking the life of the object of an old blood feud, hoping to find the moment for giving the final blow.

It is easy to imagine the unsanitary condition of the camp formed of so many thousands who take absolutely no steps to ensure cleanliness, and even those accustomed to the filth of many Eastern cities find the stench hard to bear. Early in the morning of the 9th of Zelhadjie the pilgrims are awakened by the firing of a cannon, and after the usual morning prayer they visit all the designated places found on the mountain, where mullahs preach to them.

At three o'clock a solemn procession is formed with the Shereef of Mecca at its head. Here the crowding becomes frightful. On the top of the mountain the chief imam preaches a sermon that lasts three hours, almost to sundown, and the pilgrims listen to it standing. At the close of the sermon sobbings and lamentations are heard. Many go into a religious frenzy and hysterics. Loud cries of "Labbayak!" ring from all sides, and then begins the most dangerous and fatiguing part of the ceremony, that of "El-Dafu-min-Arafaat," or the "hurry from Arafat."

As this begins about sunset in a land where there is no twilight to speak of, darkness soon sets in upon the horde of jostling, pushing camels, horses, mules and asses, among which the foot travellers are crushed and crowded. Parties lose each other, husbands their wives, parents their children. Blows are given and received, sometimes even a dagger prick to force an opening, and screams and cries mix with the "Labbayaks." In this bedlam the only idea of each one is to push forward. In this order or disorder the retreat is made until a place is reached called "Muzdalefah," where the weary pilgrims camp for the night. Here each one is obliged to pick up several pebbles about the size of a bean for the next day's ceremony of stoning the devil.

At daybreak on the 10th of Zelhadjie, namely, on the

day of Kurban Bairam, the cannon again awakes the multitude, who hurry on to Mina. Near the entrance of this village is the "Sheitan-el-Kebir," the "Great Devil," a small buttress about eight feet high. Against this each of the pilgrims is obliged to throw, in a certain manner, one by one his seven stones, exclaiming: "In the name of Allah!" and "Allah is mighty!" "I do this in hatred of the Fiend and to his shame!"

Here the ihram is removed, barbers are ready to shave the heads, trim beards, and bring the pilgrims back to their normal condition.

The return from Mina to Mecca, where again the black stone is worshipped, is called "the flight." On their arrival at Mecca, those who have not done so before "stoning the Devil" now offer their sacrifices. Every pilgrim, however poor, tries to buy a sheep. Others richer buy several of them. From every part of the province flocks are driven to Mecca for this great event. The sheep are killed in the Mohammedan way, being laid on the ground with heads turned towards the Kaaba, the butcher exclaiming, "Bismillahie Allahu Akbaru!" The sheep are slain where most convenient, in front of the tents, anywhere, and the ground becomes literally soaked with blood, that in the heat soon decomposes, the stench being so great that residents at Jiddah have assured me that with a favourable wind it reaches that port, a distance of over fifty miles.

After the Kurban Bairam begin the three days, namely, the 11th, 12th and 13th of the month, known as the days of drying flesh. The pilgrims spend this time in Mina and have daily obligations to perform, and at the expiration of the three days return again to Mecca, once more to pray at the Kaaba. This done, pilgrims are advised to leave, on the ground that any sin committed on this sacred spot is particularly heinous. This has the double

MECCA

advantage of relieving Mecca from the presence of such multitudes, and secondly, having them scatter before the inevitable reaction which follows the religious excitement.

The inhabitants of Mecca live exclusively on what the pilgrims bring them. At the head is found the large staff of the Kaaba under the control of the Shereef. The greater part of the inhabitants are in one way or another connected with the Kaaba and receive salaries. Others occupy themselves by exploiting the pilgrims in different ways, and they are noted for their arrogance, considering themselves a privileged people.

The city itself is small, situated in a valley, or wady, which carries off the water from the neighbouring hills, and Mecca is therefore often visited by floods.

The aspiration to perform pilgrimages is to be found in every religion, but it seems to me quite safe to state that in no other are they accompanied by such complicated and exhausting rites as is the pilgrimage to Mecca. From the moment when the pilgrim dons the ihram to the time he is free to remove it again, a period of about a month, he does not belong to himself. All this time he is in a state of nervous tension, religious excitement on the one hand, and on the other the constant fear of some act of omission or commission that may annul the merit of his devotions. It is sufficient to say that he is obliged to refrain even from the act of scratching himself! He is surrounded by thousands of half-frenzied religious fanatics whose excitement is contagious. His clothing all these days consists of two strips of white cloth. In spite of the burning sun, his head is uncovered and his bare feet must tread the hot earth. He is constantly afraid of being late, or crowded back from reaching some sacred spot by the struggling egotistical mass. To this add the most exorbitant prices for the most simple necessaries of

life, even drinking water; the absence of the most primitive sanitary conveniences, and after the sacrifice the days spent in the horrible atmosphere caused by the decomposing of the offal and blood of the thousands of animals slain. The absence of medical assistance increases the mortality, always great at this time.

Interesting statistics are given of the sanitary condition of Mecca during the Hadj of 1907, which was considered a healthful one. This report was made out by Drs. Rifat and Esad, of the Turkish Sanitary Administration, and was presented to the International Sanitary Commission of Constantinople.[1] This report cannot raise any suspicion of exaggeration; it would naturally, being drawn up by the Turkish authorities, seek to underestimate the evils of pilgrimages. From this report we see that in spite of its being a favourable year, the mortality among the pilgrims at Mecca was enormous, from sixty to one hundred dying each day, and sometimes more. The greatest number of deaths (16.4%) was caused by pneumonia; then followed dysentery (15.9%), of which disease no patients recovered; of other stomach and bowel troubles 12.3% died. The unsanitary condition is increased by the difficulty of obtaining anything like proper lodgings, the absence of sufficient good water, owing to all the springs being contaminated by the multitudes, and by their being churned into a muddy evil-tasting fluid. The water sold by the water carriers is so much worse that only sheer necessity forces the pilgrims to buy it. Even on Mount Arafat the springs of pure water were unfit for use, as no power could keep the pilgrims from performing their ablutions in the same basins and hollows used for drinking.

The poor quality of food found in the bazaars is another

[1] Rapport sur le voyage de retour de la caravane sacrée en l'année 1324 de l'hégire. (1907.)

cause of disease, as is the fact of all these thousands performing their natural needs by the roadside, under the walls, often close to the spot where food is sold, and where swarms of flies are hovering. The large percentage of lung troubles is easily explained by the great contrast between the heat of the day and the chill of the nights, and especially to pilgrims from India and the Sudan; the exposure, lightly dressed as they are, brings on sickness that carries them off by the hundred.

Aside from these diseases, the pilgrims naturally bring to Mecca many illnesses peculiar to their own countries, which often spread, and thus, from all these causes combined, Mecca may be looked upon as a hotbed of disease that is carried back and sown along the caravan routes of the returning pilgrims.

The conditions of the land journey followed by the Hadj will be touched upon in another chapter. The sea voyage is a comparatively easy and comfortable means of travelling, and yet here we find that the mortality is considerable owing to the crowding of the steamers.

I personally knew of one shipload returning from the Hadj of 1907, when of 1,700 pilgrims on board, fifteen died. The conveying of pilgrims is undertaken by ships of various nationalities, who care more about getting a large number of passengers than about the comfort of the same. In Constantinople the International Sanitary Commission draw up rules regulating the number to be carried on each ship, but these laws are often evaded and the pilgrims subjected to most unhealthful and uncomfortable crowding.

These ship are obliged to undergo quarantine in the Turkish port of El Tor on the Sinai peninsula and the Russian port of Theodosia. On the steamers the poor pilgrims are made to pay a great deal for their board, but while in quarantine the prices are exorbitant.

In 1906 they were charged ten cents for a pound of bread in El Tor, twenty-five cents for meat and five cents a pound for charcoal, which was quite three times the normal price. The quarantines established by the Turkish Sanitary Administration, though nominally under the control of the International Council, are far below what they should be, and during epidemic years do more harm than good, the mismanagement increasing with the distance from the central organisation in Constantinople.

CHAPTER XV

PILGRIMAGES TO MEDINA

Boundary of Holy Land—Tribes of Medina—Water Supply—Date Palms—Last Years of Mohammed's Life—His Pilgrimage to Mecca—Sermon from Mount Arafat—Return to Medina—Rivals—Illness—Last Testament—Last Attendance at the Mosque—Absence of Direct Male Heirs—Favourite Wives—Their Influence—Property Left by Mohammed—The Sword of the Prophet and its History—Tomb of the Prophet—Abu-Bekr, Omar and Others—Muzzawir—Mosque of Kuba—Cemetery of El Bakia—Other Mosques—Forced Worship at Omar's Tomb—Staff of the Mosque—Eunuchs—Slave Trade—Inhabitants of Medina—Shereefs and Sayids—The Damascus Caravan—Its Historical Origin—Surrie Emini—Ceremony of Start from Constantinople—Sacred Camel—Mahmal—Gathering of Pilgrims in Damascus—General Character of Route—Akiam, Sakkas, Muhafez—Stages—Sanitary Conditions—Order of March—Tent Pitching—Appearance of Camp, Food of Pilgrims—Water—Martyrs or Shahudies—Caravan During Epidemics—Robberies by Bedouins and their Causes—Road between Mecca and Medina—Mutual Relations of Bedouins—Kharbi—The Hedjaz Railway and its Importance.

MEDINA is situated about 130 miles from its port, Yambu, on the Red Sea. This distance is generally accomplished in four caravan days, but on swift dromedaries may be done in less than half that time. Here, as in Mecca, the land for three days' march from Medina, on every side, is considered as sacred and forbidden under pain of death to all unbelievers. The boundary of the sacred soil on the Yambu route is Zul Caliphah. Being considered a sacred city, Medina has about 100 titles, used in its praise.

The most familiar are "Mukadess," sacred, "Arz Allah," God's earth, "Beit-ul-Ressoul," the house of the Ambassador or the Prophet. They also call Medina the Pure, Blessed, Beautiful, etc. The city itself is not large, and consists of three parts, the fort, the city and the suburbs. In the city are to be found not more than 8,000 Turks. As is the case of most Eastern towns, the city itself is surrounded by a wall, and has four gates. The streets are narrow and filthy. The water supply was brought through underground channels by Solyman the Magnificent; each house, however, has, in addition, its own well, as water is reached at a depth of not over twenty feet. Owing to the plentiful water supply palm gardens abound, bearing dates that are renowned throughout Arabia, and it is said that there are as many as 139 varieties.

We must notice, from the beginning, that pilgrimages to Medina are not obligatory. They are simply meritorious acts, but still every Mohommedan considers it his duty to visit the tomb of the Prophet.

The mosque in which the grave itself is found is called "El Nebavi." It stands over the spot where Mohammed's celebrated she-camel, El Kaswa, lay down with him during the flight from Mecca. Here he lived with his family, and here are found the tombs of the Prophet himself and those nearest to him, among others, that of Ayesha, his favourite wife. She is held by the Sunnites to be the highest and purest type of womanhood. After the death of the Prophet, it was through Ayesha that the views of the great teacher were made known on many subjects, which, at her dictation, his disciples noted, and which were afterwards included in the writings of the Mohammedan theologians. Thanks to Ayesha, too, we learn much of the intimate house life, as, for instance, her jealousy of the other wives, fifteen in number, and especially of her feelings towards one, a Copt, named Miriam.

All of these wives are buried here, excepting Kadija, whose tomb is in Mecca. There is a tradition that Ayesha once dreamed that three standards were set up in their house, and Mohammed interpreted it as meaning that three graves would be on that spot, his own, Abu-Bekr's and Osman's. It may be that this dream is the outcome of popular imagination, arising after the facts had taken place, but the Mohammedans believe it implicitly.

We have a good many reliable details concerning the last days of Mohammed. His teachings spread faster than perhaps the Prophet himself had expected. By the 10th year of the hegira, or 631 A.D., it had become firmly established throughout the greater part of the Arabian peninsula, and the formula, "There is but one God and Mohammed the ambassador of God," had become the creed of the new Moslem faith, and thereby defined Mohammed's position. Wishing probably still further to establish his personal influence, Mohammed undertook, when sixty-four years old, what proved to be his last journey to Mecca at the head of 100,000 of his followers.

In spite of his age and the weakness that was to lead him to the grave, he fulfilled all the trying and complicated rites of the worship at the Kaaba, preached a powerful sermon on Mount Arafat, and with his own hand slaughtered as sacrifices sixty-three camels and liberated sixty-three slaves, one to represent each year of his life. In his sermon on Arafaat he alluded to this as his last visit to Mecca, and his prophecy came to pass, for soon after his return to Medina his health became so much worse that he took to his bed, though even there he continued to work, even going so far as to organise an expedition against some rivals who also claimed divine missions and offered to divide their authority with Mohammed. Feeling that he was failing, he ordered himself to be carried to Ayesha's apartments, where he gave his last com-

mands, ordering his body to be washed after his death and laid by the side of the grave that was to be dug in the same room where he lay. He further requested that his body should be left for some time alone in case the angel Gabriel and the hosts of heaven should desire to come and pray by it. After giving these commands, in spite of his extreme weakness Mohammed went to the mosque which was adjoining his room, mounted the "mimbar," or pulpit, and addressed the congregation in the following words: "O Mussulmans, if in my life I have struck any man, here is my back, let him smite me; if I have injured any one, the way of the injured is to return the injury; if I have taken from any man his property, let him fearlessly claim it, not dreading my vengeance."

When, at the close of his address, someone spoke up claiming three drachmas, Mohammed returned the money, with the words, "Better shame in this world than in the world to come."

A few days later, gathering his last forces he again went to the mosque, and in a clear voice entreated his hearers to follow the teachings of the Koran as an infallible book, the star to guide the true believer in all the temptations that were in store for the Mohammedan world. He then retired to his room, and in a few hours, on the 8th of June, 632 A.D., he died with his head on Ayesha's knee.

Mohammed died without appointing a successor. Although he had fifteen wives, only two of them bore him children: Kadija, his first wife, a widow in whose employ he had been before his marriage, had four sons and four daughters; the Copt, Miriam, also had one son; but all these boys died before their father. Nine wives survived the Prophet, and they all remained widows, as the Prophet in one of the chapters of the Koran forbade

"believers" to marry them. The explanation of Mohammed's possessing fifteen wives, in contradiction to his limiting his followers to four wives, is explained by the Sunnites as an exception due to the exalted state of the Prophet. The Shiites follow Mohammed's example and permit, under one form or another, an unlimited number.

Of the wives of Mohammed, the Moslems hold as the most important the following: Kadija, his first wife, who was much older than the Prophet; Ayesha, his best loved wife; Hafza, the daughter of Omar-Umm Habiba; Safia, a Jewess; and Zeinab.

The first confidant of the Prophet's revelations was his wife Kadija, to whom he owed much, but afterwards rather neglected for Ayesha. There is no doubt that Mohammed learned much of the other religions of his age during his journeys while in the employ of Kadija, but that his wives also added to his knowledge one cannot doubt, for one of them was a Copt and another a Jewess.

Although Mohammed always reserved for himself one fifth of all the war spoils, on his death his property consisted only of 22 horses, 2 asses, Ufar and Yafur, 5 mules, among which was a white one called Dul-Dul, 24 camels, including the celebrated El Kaswa, 100 sheep, arms, a mantle, 2 banners and a green turban. The absence of further wealth is explained partly by the Prophet's known generosity to the poor, and partly to the expenses of so numerous a harem.

Over the tomb of the Prophet is built a mosque bearing the same name as the principal mosque of Mecca, "Medjid-esh-Shereef," which it resembles also in its architecture. The Medina mosque was built by the Caliph Walid I. in 707 of our era. In order to make room for this mosque the caliph ordered all the surrounding houses to be removed, among them the house of Ayesha, then partly in ruins. This act created a good deal of discontent in

Medina, and to propitiate those whose houses had been destroyed, the caliph made a pilgrimage in person the following year to the Prophet's tomb, which he covered with a precious covering. This was the origin of the custom still continued, and the covering received the name of "astaresh-Shereef," "the sacred covering," and it is generally sewn in the sultan's harem. In former times this covering was only changed at the beginning of each reign, and later on in every seven years. The old coverings are used for the tombs of sultans and imperial princes. The grave itself is all hung about and concealed by hangings of great price, as the popular belief is that no one could look at it without losing his eyesight. The same tradition states that Mohammed lies in the grave on his right side, facing Mecca, and with his cheek resting on the palm of his right hand. Behind the tomb and facing it, lie Abu-Bekr, then Omar, and next an empty grave destined for Jesus Christ. According to the Moslem teaching, another was crucified in the place of Christ, and this grave awaits his second coming. In the mosque, but at one side, are the tombs of Ayesha and Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet.

In visiting these places there are none of the ceremonies observed in Mecca. Even kneeling at the tombs is considered to be a sin, as during his lifetime Mohammed repeatedly expressed the desire that his remains should receive no honour nor worship, which belongs to God alone. The pilgrims who visit Medina, therefore, simply recite prayers or supplications composed for the various stations appointed. As the order of "ziarat," or visitation of the various sacred spots, is strictly laid down, pilgrims are obliged to have guides, called muzzawir, by whom the pilgrim is known as "zair." The prayers said at each station are rather invocations, and as they are all similar, it will be sufficient to cite the one repeated at

Fatima's tomb. "Peace be with thee, daughter of the messenger of Allah! Peace be with the daughter of the Prophet of Allah! Peace be with the daughter of Mustafa ['Chosen,' one of the titles of Mohammed]. Peace with thee, thou mother of the Shurafa! Peace with thee, O lady amongst women! Peace with thee, O fifth of the Ahl-el-Kisa! Peace with thee, O spouse of our lord Ali! Peace be with thee, O mother of Hassan and Hussein, the two moons of light, the two pearls, the two princes of the youths of heaven and gladness of the eyes of true believers!" and so on.

Aside from the burial places of those already mentioned, there are about a hundred other stations or places of "ziarat" in and about Medina, venerated for some event celebrated by el Islam and to which the pilgrims go with their guides. Among such places the mosque of Kuba is worth mentioning, situated some three miles to the southeast of Medina in a valley of the same name. This mosque was founded by Mohammed, who personally laid the first stone on ground owned by one Abu Ayub, whose descendants still claim the privilege of keeping the keys.

The cemetery of El Bakia is also of interest. Here are buried, according to tradition, 100,000 followers of the Prophet. On the last day it is believed that Mohammed will rise first and then Abraham and Omar, after whom all those who are buried at El Bakia. Whatever tombstones there were in this cemetery were destroyed by the Wahabees during the time of their occupation of Mecca. Here, too, is repeated a prayer or benediction, "Peace be with ye, O people of El Bakia! Peace be with ye, O, admitted to the presence of the Most High!"

The mosques in which are buried Hussein, the son of Ali, Imam Zein-el-Abdeen, Mohammed-el-Bakir and Imam Djafar, the grandson and great-grandsons of the

Prophet, are particularly venerated by the Shiites, who, on visiting them, give full vent to their religious emotions, weeping and wailing. Their sentiments are quite different when visiting the graves of Abu-Bekr and in particular that of Omar, the anniversary of whose death, as mentioned in another chapter, is celebrated with joy in Persia even at the present time, and whom the Shiites regard as responsible for all the misfortunes that came to the family of Ali.

The Sunnites watch the Shiites narrowly as they reach this station, and being in the minority in a hostile land, the poor Shiites are forced to repeat the prescribed formula, with sometimes ill-concealed hatred in their hearts, but repeat the prayers they must, or risk being instantly put to death. Some, however, in doing so, console themselves by inaudibly changing the name of Omar into "Humar," "ass!"

A spring where Mohammed quenched his thirst and a cave where he hid are among the many other places of "ziarat."

The staff of officers and servants in the mosques of Medina is very great; the chief control being in the hands of eunuchs, who are preferred on the following grounds: 1. Having no family ties they are more apt to give all their attention to the care of the sacred buildings. 2. As they have to come in contact with women unknown to them. 3. The holy places are sacred, cut off, "harems," therefore eunuchs are most appropriate as guardians. In olden times the governor of Medina was at the same time guardian of the mosque and bore the title of "Sheikhul-Harem," and was appointed from the chief eunuchs, or "Kizler Aghassi," of the sultans, whose ambition it was to get this post as the crowning of their difficult and sometimes dangerous career.

In passing I shall say a few words about the institution

of eunuchs and slaves, without which the most superficial study of Moslem life would be incomplete.

The custom of having eunuch attendants is of very ancient date. Babylonian inscriptions tell of the office of "Papsares," minister in the court, who also had charge of the portion of the palace occupied by the women. This was one of the most important of the court functions and was always performed by the "Great Eunuch."

Mohammed, permitting polygamy and advocating the seclusion of women, naturally opened the way to the further establishment of this institution, which, to the disgrace of the twentieth century, be it said, still continues.

Formerly the eunuchs were of those taken captive in wars, but later on African slaves furnished the majority of this class, and a lucrative trade sprang up of slaves, both male and female. As late as fifty years ago there was no important Mohammedan city without its slave market. Nor were Negroes the only ones sold here. The most prized were Circassian and Georgian girls brought from the Caucasus. At that time every rich Mohammedan aspired to have Circassians in his harem, which accounts for the frequency of the Caucasian type found among Turks. Palgrave, who visited Arabia in the fifties of the past century, writes that in spite of the treaty between England and the Sultan of Muscat abolishing the slave trade, 6,000 slaves were yearly brought to the ports of Muscat, Jiddah and Suez. Palgrave gives the prices they brought as £9 for a healthy boy and a little more for a girl. A girl of above nine years was sold for £22. Abyssinians brought the best price among the black slaves, but the Circassians were the most prized; even at that date a girl brought from £90 to £350. Most of these became the favourites of sultans, or men of rank, and eventually succeeded in getting their fathers or brothers into important positions, which led to

so many Circassians being found in military and administrative posts.

In the last half of the past century a convention was drawn up abolishing the slave trade, which was a blow to this disgraceful traffic, but did not quite crush it, the difference being that it was carried on secretly. When we were in Bagdad, by means of certain agents slaves of both sexes could be easily bought, but at prices far higher than in the time of Palgrave.

Pilgrims possessing sufficient means seldom return from Mecca without adding to their household one or more slaves bought there, and so the supply of eunuchs, which are found in all wealthy Mohammedan houses, is in this way maintained.

Moslems justify slavery by maintaining that the slaves are well treated by them. The Koran preaches kindness towards slaves, and cases of cruelty to slaves kept by Moslems are certainly the great exception.

I personally had the good fortune while in Bagdad to be able to set three slaves free, and this was obtained rather by personal relations with the authorities than by basing my demands on the convention. To the honour of the young Constitutional Government I must note that one of the first acts of Parliament was the abolition of slavery throughout the Turkish Empire. So officially, at least, the right stand is taken; time will show how effectually.

The need of eunuchs is so closely connected with Mohammedan life and customs, that there is little hope of this outrageous practice being stopped until public opinion becomes sufficiently raised to understand the depths of this depravity.

But to return to the Medina mosque. The chief guardian is a pasha sent from Constantinople, but his aides, secretaries, servants and eunuchs number over a hundred.

The lower class of attendants is divided into three orders: first, porters; secondly, eunuchs, whose duty it is to cleanse the inside of the shrine itself; and thirdly, water carriers. Then there is of course a large number of guides and others, all from the local inhabitants, and claiming the right of keeping the privilege of these services on the following grounds. The majority of the inhabitants of Medina consists of descendants of Mohammed and of his apostles. The descendants of the Prophet who trace their genealogy from Hassan are called by the Turks Shereefs, and these, arguing the sanctity of their lineage, claim the right of occupying all posts in any way connected with the worship of their great ancestor. These Shereefs not only are free from all taxes in Medina, but occupy positions about the shrine, drawing pay partly from the sultan and partly from the revenue of the mosque.

The funds for the sacred cities of Mecca and Medina are received through a special agent living in Constantinople and known as the "Vekil-ul-Haramein," the representative of the sacred places. The Shereefs as a whole are called "Evladi paigambar," or children of the Prophet. An analogical position to that of the Shereefs is occupied in Persia by the Sayids, where they, too, have the general name of "Evladi paigambar," and as individuals that of Sayid. In Persia, as well as in India, the term Shereef denotes offspring of the daughter of a Sayid married with a man not of the same extraction.

The remainder of the population of Medina, the descendants of the apostles of Mohammed, are divided into four tribes: 1. Beit-el-Ansar, holding the keys of the mosque of Kuba. 2. Beit-Abu Djud, who serve as imams and muezzins in the mosques. 3. Beit-esh-Shaab, occupying minor posts in the mosques. 4. Beit-el-Karrash, the majority of whom are shopkeepers. There are also

some Turks, Kurds, Syrians, Indians, Caucasians, Tartars, Bukhariotes, Persians and Afghans settled here, in order to devote themelves to religious exercises and die on holy ground.

Each year what is known as the sacred caravan is sent to Mecca through Damascus and Medina, carrying the covering of the Kaaba and other rich gifts from the sultan, who, not making a pilgrimage himself, sends instead by special officers these gifts. The sending of this caravan is closely connected with Turkish history, and is one of the sultan's prerogatives as caliph of the Moslem world.

After the establishment of Mohammedanism in Egypt the reigning caliph, Omar Ben Ketaba, sent the first sacred caravan from there, and this custom is continued, the Egyptian caravan being distinguished from the Damascus caravan, and is known as the "Mahmal Missiri."

Since the reign of Selim I. the Turkish sultans have also sent an annual caravan under the leadership of the "Surrei Emini," that starts with great pomp from Constantinople. It is known, however, as the Damascus caravan, for it is there that the pilgrims congregate, often to the number of 100,000, and from which spot the caravan as such begins its weary desert march. Since the opening of the Suez Canal the Damascus caravan has lost much of its former significance and it is not so numerous, numbering not over 10,000 to 15,000, as the sea route is far easier and less expensive.

The ceremony of leaving Constantinople is on the 12th of the lunar month of Redjeb, or five months before the feast of Kurban Bairam. The actual handing over of the gifts of the sultan to those who are to carry them to Mecca is performed at the palace. The covering destined for the Kaaba is placed on a richly caparisoned camel, and the other gifts on similarly decorated mules.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE CITY OF NEDJEF

From Constantinople the caravan crosses the Bosphorus to Scutari, on the Asiatic shore, where the gifts of His Majesty are placed on other camels and mules, the original animals with their trappings returning to Constantinople. The covering of the Kaaba is placed in a mahmal or sort of litter attached to the camel's saddle, such as the Prophet himself used to travel in, and from which on his camel's back, as from a raised pulpit, many of his most fiery sermons were delivered. The mahmal camels kept in Constantinople are said to be the descendants of the Prophet's own camel, and never accompany the caravan for fear of accident, but are kept in the imperial stables, and great attention is paid to preserving the purity of the breed. The camels bearing the mahmal are therefore called manfil or mahmal, the latter meaning a seat or throne, and the former, a beast of burden. The long caravan route is made on camels from Damascus, which are also by tradition descended from one belonging to the Prophet.

At the time of the starting of the sacred caravan the usually quiet city of Damascus becomes animated. Pilgrims flock here from every quarter of El Islam; owners of mules and camels drive them here in great numbers; saddle shops carry on a lively trade in saddles and fixings for the march; the saddles bought being adjusted to the camels' backs, and seldom, if ever, removed on the way. Water skins, too, are bought, and provisions of dried meat and other edibles supplied.

The gathering point for the caravan is the lake of Muzzareb, two days' march from the city of Damascus, twenty-eight marches from Medina and forty-two from Mecca. This distance is over an almost waterless tract of land, there being but twelve wells between Damascus and Medina. To protect these precious wells from hostile nomads, small forts were constructed by the Turks with a

garrison of ten to twelve on paper, but in fact six to seven soldiers are to be found in each "kala."

On account of the scarcity of water the caravan is obliged to make forced marches of not less than two hours a day, and there are some days on which eighteen to twenty hours have to be made. The difficulty of the road depends largely upon the season of the year in which the Hadj is made. In the dry season the dangers are increased, as some of the wells then go dry. Before the starting of the caravan the governor of Damascus informs himself as to the quantity of water to be depended upon, and the length of the marches is arranged according to the result of these inquiries. Occasionally it is found necessary to send as many as 1,500 water skins to meet the caravan at certain stages. The difficulties attending the march of 10,000 to 13,000 people under such circumstances are easily understood, as well as the necessity of strict order and discipline in the caravan.

As already stated, the camels are furnished by special men in Damascus, some contractors presenting as many as 200 to 300 beasts. These are given in charge of akiam, or camel men, who lead the animals and in camp serve the pilgrims for a certain additional sum. Aside from these men are grooms who care for the camels, and sakkas or water carriers who supply the pilgrims with water, also at a given price. There are others whose duty is the pitching of tents and packing up the same in the morning ready for loading. The tents are of all varieties, from the simple umbrella-shaped ones with one pole and sides reaching to the ground, to the complicated richly embroidered tents of the opulent that are divided into rooms. The tent pitchers become very adept in their work, and in an incredibly short time they pitch or strike a camp. They load the tents onto the camels and start off before the caravan proper, pressing on in order to reach

the halting place in time to have the tents up before the arrival of the main body. The order of the camp is the same during the entire journey, so that the pilgrims arriving in the camp have no trouble in finding their own quarters. The tents belong to the owners of the camels and are hired with them.

The halting place is chosen by the chief leader of the caravan, or "muhafez," who gives his instructions to his aides, they to the camel men, who in turn instruct those under them. Throughout the march the muhafez has unlimited power of control, and of deciding all questions connected with the well-being of the caravan, as well as acting as judge in cases of differences.

To protect the caravan from the Bedouins who constantly hover in its vicinity is a strong body of soldiers with one or two mountain guns carried on camels or mules.

Each morning two hours before the start a cannon is fired as a signal for breaking the camp. The second signal is for the move, and it is done in such order that all the camels of each owner go together. In the front of the caravan are the tent pitchers with the tents; they are followed by the water carriers with their camels loaded with water skins; then an armed band of Bedouins hired to protect the caravan from their hostile countrymen; then comes the advance guard of the caravan itself, consisting of fifty cavalry men mounted on mules riding in double rows; they are followed by two guns, ammunition, and the baggage of the leader of the caravan and other official persons. The pilgrims come next, always in the same order and in groups under the leadership of the camel-owners. In the middle of the caravan is the mahmal in which is the covering of the Kaaba. The caravan marches in two lines, and often strings out to a length of some six miles. Some three or four miles in the rear of the caravan is a

body of police two hundred strong, mounted on camels, to pick up stragglers. On arriving at the halting place the camp is formed in perfect order. In the centre is the tent of the Surrie Emini, on the right is that of the leader of the caravan, and on the left is the commander of the military escort and those of other officials. The tents of pilgrims from Mesopotamia and Irak are on the south side of the camp, while the Persians are on the north. The military escort surrounds the camp and a sentinel is placed every sixty paces. When the camp is settled it presents the appearance of a town, with streets, cafés and bazaars where provisions may be bought, at very high prices, to be sure, and of poor quality, to boot.

About sunset two guns are fired, after which no one is allowed to pass in or out of the camp, and the sentries see that this rule is carried out.

The life of the camp is by this time in full swing. The cafés and bazaars are crowded, grooms busily clean and attend to the horses, the servants of the richer pilgrims set to work to prepare the inevitable pilaw, desert Arabs sell milk and cheese, and butchers' shops offer meat at an exorbitant rate. The crowd is made up of the most varied costumes and types, speaking in many tongues and representing as many nationalities, but the common tie is the same. When the hour of prayer approaches every face is turned towards Mecca, and in unison the great multitude prostrates itself in prayer.

In spite of the order observed in the ways described, no sanitary measures are adopted, and even after one night the ground becomes infested with filth and the air polluted, which adds to the danger in case of epidemics. The health of the Hadj is also affected by the food eaten during the long and fatiguing journey. A large majority exist on what they take with them from Damascus, dried meat, cheese and dried bread. As to water, the case is

more serious still. It must not be forgotten that water is not to be had at every halting place and that a supply sometimes for two or three days has to be carried. The water carriers fill all the skins taken with them at Damascus, loading four or eight on each camel, according to their size. The full skins weigh usually from 400 to 480 pounds.

As the water is drawn from wells each sakka has a long rope and leathern bucket, also a three-legged contrivance over which he fixes a sort of pulley for drawing the water. As soon as a well is reached the sakkas surround it, quickly filling their skins, and always in prescribed order, first the carriers of the Surrie Emini, then the leader of the caravan, the officers and men of the guard, and then the water carriers of the pilgrims have their turn. The water has to be so economically given out that it is only used for drinking and cooking, none for washing purposes, the poor pilgrims being deprived during the dry season of a wash throughout the journey. The ablutions prescribed before prayer are performed with sand, as is permitted by the Koran. Such ablutions are termed "teyammun." The water in some of the wells is bitterish to the taste, in others brackish and often muddy.

After the water carriers have filled their skins the camels are led up to the wells to drink, the spilled water forming liquid mud which runs back into the wells, making the water so troubled that it takes days to settle.

All these hardships taken together make the Hadj journey even under the best conditions one of great hardship, and on an average the caravan has one death per day. We must remember that among the pilgrims are numbers who go on foot, many of whom are unable to endure the long marches of eighteen to twenty hours, especially as these poorer pilgrims are generally half starved. When they become too exhausted to continue they leave the ranks

and lie down by the roadside to die. No attention is paid to them; each one is thinking of himself and trying to keep his own place in the caravan. Those who thus fall by the way are called "shahud," or martyrs, and according to popular belief go direct to Paradise. Those to whom death does not come at once are often killed for their poor rags by the Bedouins, who like vultures hover about the rear of the caravan. More unfortunate ones who linger on are surrounded by jackals, hyenas and birds of prey. There are litters to be hired for about $5.00 a day for those who are too weak to ride or walk, but these are of course possible only for the rich pilgrim. During epidemics the Hadj is a fearful sight. The English traveller Doughty in his wonderful book, "Arabia Deserta," tells of joining the Damascus caravan during a cholera year. He says that they lost as many as a hundred a day. The dead were carried off to one side, shallow graves scooped out with a stick and sand thrown over the corpses. One such, who was buried as dead in a very shallow grave of warm sand, came to life and, crawling out, managed to drag himself to some Arab tents, and when strong enough drifted from one encampment to another, and only after two years turned up in Damascus, to the astonishment of all his family, who had already divided up his property, and took a good deal of convincing to accept him as alive and the owner of his own estate!

Nowhere is more heartless selfishness found than on the Hadj. The very struggle for existence that the entire journey represents makes each one look out for himself and pay no attention to the suffering of others, and this callousness leaves its impress for life on the character.

The Syrian proverb is very apt in illustrating this: "Beware of your neighbour if he is a Hadji. If he has twice performed the Hadj, lock your door; if he has made it

three times, brick up your door and make another on the opposite side of your house."

Aside from all these other miseries the Hadj caravans are often subjected to robberies. The Turkish Government employs two measures with more or less success against this evil. First in sending an armed escort, and secondly in sending gifts to the sheikhs of the Hedjaz and Yemen, hiring camels from them and also in employing their men as hired escorts for the caravan. In spite of these means the Bedouins occasionally succeed in robbing the caravan, and sometimes in holding it up for a considerable time, until a ransom is sent. The military escort is unable to cope with a united force of Bedouins, as the caravan is strung out to so great a length, and if the attack be at night the panic is generally so great that the Bedouins can easily take advantage of the confusion and cut off a part of the caravan. Not farther back than the nineties of the past century the following incident occurred. The military escort succeeded during an attack in gathering the pilgrims in the centre and beating off the Bedouins. The latter, however, surrounded the whole caravan, laying siege to it, as it were. The caravan held out for two months, when reinforcements came, but not before many of the soldiers and pilgrims had succumbed for want of water and food.

The most dangerous portion of the entire journey is the part between Medina and Mecca, where there is the choice between three routes: the first, called the "Darb-esh-Sharkie," eastern route, runs almost parallel to the Red Sea and at a distance from it of from some one hundred to one hundred and forty miles. This is the shortest, but it is extremely difficult for beasts of burden and therefore only Bedouins and light caravans can profit by it. The second route, farther inland, called "Darb-es-Sultan," was the route followed by the sacred caravan up to

about fifteen years ago, when a third road was chosen, the "Darb-ul-feri," which branches off from the sultan's road, making a shorter cut. But all these roads are infested with Bedouin robbers who look upon the caravans as a rightful source of their yearly income.

This view is not surprising when we consider the Bedouin's life and his viewing the desert as his own. The mutual relation between the tribes of the Hedjaz is a complicated threefold one, "Askhab," comrades, namely, an offensive and defensive alliance between tribes; "Kaum," hostile tribes between whom is constant war; and "Akhwan," brotherhood, an alliance for defending their land from all outsiders, in a manner forbidding all others from passing through or profiting by their territory in any way without paying a toll. As the pilgrims passing in great caravans break this law when not paying the Bedouins a certain tribute, the latter consider they have a perfect right to take it by force in the way of robbery. In spite of large sums spent by the Turkish Government as toll money to many Bedouin tribes, it is impossible for them to make their authority felt in the waterless desert, where the Bedouin is at home and holds the caravan with its scanty water supply at his mercy.

The most powerful tribe in the Hedjaz is the Beni Kharb, who are able to put 19,000 armed horsemen in the field. This tribe is divided into two main branches, the Beni Salem and Masrukh, which in turn have numerous subdivisions.

The robbery of pilgrim caravans takes place almost annually, and I have personally seen hundreds of pilgrims who, having been robbed, managed in some way to get back as far as Constantinople.

The completion of the Hedjaz railway to Mecca via Medina will of course change the entire form of the Hadj, and will have an enormous influence on the whole

Moslem world. It will draw the pilgrims back to the historical Damascus route, but railway cars and locomotives will replace tents and camels.

The cheapness of this route will make it preferable to that of the Suez Canal, as it is intended to make the entire cost of the ticket from Damascus to Mecca and back but £3, or less than $15.

In 1910 the Hedjaz railway reached Medina, and soon the description of the Hadj as given in this chapter will be past history.

CHAPTER XVI

IN THE LAND OF THE "LION AND THE SUN"

Climate of Persia—Forms of Irrigation—Three Types of Villages—Cultivation of the Soil—Sheep-raising—Haying—Gardens and Orchards—Three Enemies of the Farmer—The Agricultural Class—Persian Cities—Baths—Instances of Burying Alive—Squares—Street Dogs.

"IRAN has seven climates," every Persian will tell you with pride if the conversation turns on the climate of his native land. And he is not far from right, for though Persia occupies an area of about six hundred and fifty thousand square miles, it presents the greatest variety of climatic conditions. Not only do we find the differences natural in the extreme northern and southern parts of the country—as the cool plateaus of Azerbaijan and Khorasan as compared with the almost tropical heat of the districts bordering on the Persian Gulf—but there is a great difference also to be found in the climate of one and the same district owing to the nearness of mountains. As, for instance, in the cities of Tabriz, Teheran and Meshed, the summers are very hot, but a few hours' ride up into the surrounding hills will at once bring one into a cool and delightful atmosphere. The possibility, therefore, of changing quickly and within a few miles the conditions of life, the very climate and nature, is one of the most characteristic features of Persia.

The Iran plateau is surrounded on nearly every side by mountain barriers that have connecting chains. Such topographical peculiarities naturally influence the climate. The moist air brought by the winds from the sea

becomes cooler as it rises to the higher altitudes, where finally, freed from vapour, it reaches the centre of the plateau in the form of dry air. While, therefore, we find that the regions lying along the Caspian are damp, and the shores of the Persian Gulf are moist and very hot, the central provinces have a continental climate with little rain and very dry atmosphere. The greater part of Persia has almost no rain in the summer, and in the autumn rains set in that become snow on the mountains. In the spring the melting snow feeds the mountain streams that irrigate the plains below.

Owing to such a formation of the country there are no navigable rivers in Persia, with the exception of the Karun, that flows into the Shatt-el-Arab and is navigable only in its lower part. All other rivers are turbulent mountain streams, unnavigable even in the springtime, and partly or entirely drying up in the autumn. But even such rivers are few, the Aras (Araxes), Atrek, and the Sefid-Rud in the Caspian basin, and the Mand and Jerrahi in that of the Persian Gulf. The remaining rivers, having no outlet to the sea, fall into salt lakes or are lost in swamps or sand.

Owing to the absence of rains in the central part of the country artificial irrigation has to be employed. Water in Persia is life. In the Shariat, land is considered as belonging to the one who "gives it life"—that is, irrigates it. Wherever there is a natural or artificial watercourse, the desert immediately blooms, and in such places Persia is really the garden described by poets. A failure in the water supply necessitates the desertion of the place and explains the barren ruins that mark once fertile spots. Nowhere is water so prized and so a part of the very life as in Persia. Describing the climate of a place the Persian says, "Ab hawasie khob est"—its water and air are good. The highest praise of a place is "ab ziad dorad"—it is well watered.

The most universal means of obtaining water is a very ingenious one. In some fold of the mountain where the presence of water is indicated a well is dug of about a yard in diameter and sometimes as deep as 150 to 200 feet. If water is found, another well is dug, some 70 or 90 feet from the first, and then a third, and so on in a straight line, and these wells are all connected underground by a tunnel, 2½ or 3 feet high. Such a line of wells often extends for miles, the wells of course decreasing in depth as lower ground is reached, until the last one may not be over four feet deep, and then the water in one united stream is carried off by the irrigating canals. Such streams are called Rud Khaneh. Rud means river, but as rivers are so scarce in most parts of Persia, these artificial canals are all that the people can understand by the term. The quantity of water in their canals is measured by the seng—stone. They will tell you that "this river has four stones of water." A stone is a quantity of water capable of turning a small millstone—that is, a stream of water of from four to five inches in diameter. Anyone owning a "stone" of water may be considered to be in opulent circumstances.

The quantity of water given to each cultivator is estimated by so many hours a week. A gardener will tell you "he has two hours of water," meaning that for two hours every week throughout the season the water is turned into his plot of ground. The owners of the wells, or "kanats," sell water by the hour, or one can obtain a partnership in a kanat. It is impossible to state the average price of water by the hour, for it varies in different parts and depends upon the quantity of water in the kanat, the situation of the village and the number of kanats it may possess. Near Teheran ten years ago, a "seng" of water once a week cost about one hundred dollars for the year. According to this estimate, a kanat that is sold for

TYPE OF ARAB PHYSICIAN

every hour of the twenty-four will give an annual income of two thousand four hundred and eighty dollars.

The digging and preservation of these kanats is a very costly undertaking. The men making it their profession are called "muganni," and are wonderfully clever in discovering water and in choosing the direction for their wells. They are very secretive and jealously guard the principles that guide them. There is always a risk of making a mistake, and then the owner of the kanat loses large sums, but this seldom happens. Oftener a rich source of water is found, bringing a large premium on the capital expended.

The work of digging the wells is laborious and slow. Small spades are used, and a wheel is rigged up at the mouth of the well by means of which the earth is brought up in leather buckets and emptied around the well, so that in the end each well is surrounded by a circular pile of earth and is as in a crater. So long as the earth thus piled up keeps its shape, the position of the wells is well defined, and long lines of such mounds running in all directions and often many lines parallel is one of the most characteristic features of the landscape. But when with time and the action of rains these guarding ramparts become obliterated, the kanats form a serious danger to the belated or unwary traveller, and many are the accidents caused by them.

The actual digging of the well is the easiest part of the work. The most painful is the connecting gallery or tunnel, where, owing to its lowness, the work has to be done kneeling and bent nearly double, often in a considerable depth of cold water.

The Shariat gives precise instructions as to the distance from each other at which parallel lines of kanats belonging to different parties may be carried out without affecting each other's water supply.

A second means of irrigation is employed where there are rivers or mountain streams, and consists in drawing the water from them into canals. In such a way the rice plantations near the Caspian in Azerbaijan and Khorasan are watered.

The third system is that of making reservoirs or dams where mountain streams are formed in the springtime by the melting snows and rains. These dams are called "derbends," and the many villages bearing that name and situated where such irrigation could easily be had, but is not resorted to now, proves that in older times this simple means demanding only foresight was more universal than it is at the present time.

Viewed from a distance Persian villages form dots, like green oases on the plains. On approaching one finds cultivation and trees only where the irrigating canals run. Many villages, like the towns, are surrounded by high mud walls, giving them a dreary aspect. And there is no street life or gaiety after dark. The chief feature of each village is its " Rud Khaneh," or stream of water that runs through the village and then out into the fields. On either side of these streams willow trees are planted, and the branches that are cut off each year serve as fuel. The chief fuel is, however, made by the women in the form of cakes of manure mixed in water, and sometimes with a little chopped straw added. These are dried in the sun and then stacked in cone-shaped piles on the flat roofs or about the village streets.

In the poorer villages the houses consist of one room, which serves as sleeping and living room for the family, but generally there are two separate apartments, one for the men and the other for the women. The stables for greater safety are generally situated in the innermost part of the closely packed village, so that often the cattle pass through the living room to reach them. The roofs are

flat, with a hole to let out the smoke. If there are other windows than that hole, oil paper frequently takes the place of glass.

More picturesque are the villages built on the steep mountain slope, where the houses rise in terraces, the roof of one forming the yard of the one next above. Large villages have small shops, mosques, and often a common bath.

The villages are surrounded by fields and gardens. The great problem the farmer has to face is to carry out the system of irrigating canals in such a way as to water every part of his fields evenly. In solving this problem, the Persians have attained a skill that is little short of perfection, and one may sometimes see a stream running uphill!

In passing I must say a few words in regard to Persian agriculture. In most places it is carried on in a very primitive way, the land receiving no attention other than a superficial turning over with a wooden plough and then watered. In some places, fertilisation of ashes or guano is used. In the plain of Urumiah the numerous ash heaps, remains of the fire worshipper's epoch, serve in this way, and in other districts, as about Tabriz, Ispahan and in Khorasan, pigeons are kept for furnishing guano. Dotted about among the fields rise mud towers of thirty to forty feet in height and some twenty-five to thirty feet in diameter, whose thick walls are pierced with holes giving access to the nests built inside the entire surface of the inner wall. Each tower has a door through which the guano can be carried out. On opening the door one is nearly deafened by the sound of hundreds of birds that take flight. Each tower, it is estimated, gives in guano about eight per cent. annually of the sums expended in its construction.

The grain ripens in many places as early as May.

When harvested by hand, it is placed on huge two-wheeled carts drawn by oxen or buffaloes, or it is loaded onto donkeys and carried to the common threshing floor of the village. Here the bundles are spread out and first threshed by driving over them several oxen hitched abreast. Then an instrument known as "charkh" is used. A seat is arranged over a number of wooden rollers that turn as the charkh is drawn. Into these rollers are sunk sharp teeth or knives. The driver, seated on the stool, drives around and around over the grain, chopping the straw into fine bits, the grain having mostly been tramped out already and dropped to the ground. After this process is finished, the winnowing is done by throwing up the mass with broad shovels. This is mostly done by night, when there is more chance of wind, and the straw as it is tossed up is carried to one side, the grain falling in a heap. The chopped straw is used for feeding horses and cattle, and the grain is sifted and thus prepared for milling.

One great advantage enjoyed by the Persian farmer over his Western brother is that he is not pressed for time nor obliged to profit by fair weather. He sows his grain, waits patiently for it to ripen, harvests it at his ease, knowing that the threshing and winnowing too will be done in good weather. The cereals mostly cultivated are wheat and barley, the latter taking the place of oats as horse feed. Both of these are sown according to circumstances as summer or winter crops, the only difference being that grain sown in the fall ripens earlier and is more apt to give a good yield.

Aside from the large flocks of sheep kept by most mountain villages, each peasant on the plains generally owns a few sheep to furnish him with wool, cheese and milk. The sheep found in Persia are of the bigtail variety, (*Ovis laticandate tartar*). The tail sometimes attains an

incredible size, and, like the hump of the camel, undoubtedly furnishes nourishment in times of need to the sheep, enabling them to exist seven to eight days without food. At such times, although the tail becomes small and flabby, there is no permanent bad result to the health of the animal. Sheep are easier to feed than any of the other milk-giving domestic animals, and are a great help and source of wealth to the peasants. In some parts of Persia sheep often bear young twice a year.

Another domestic animal very often met with is the long-suffering ass, without which one cannot imagine Persia as existing. They are hardy, easily satisfied as to food, living on straw and thistles if they cannot get better. They are used as beasts of burden and often for drawing the plough and threshing instruments.

I remember a poor man in Meshed whose entire wealth seemed to consist of a wife, ass and a baby—named in order of usefulness. On our rides we used to pass his little plot of rented land. In the spring we would see the wife and ass together drawing the plough, which was guided by the husband, the baby toddling behind or asleep in the rough booth they had rigged up for the season. When the grain ripened the man and woman laboriously reaped it, while the ass browsed by them, glad of his season of respite. And so we watched the work carried on in all its stages by the three, until, completed, the little donkey carried home on his back first the grain, then the straw, and lastly the booth, household belongings and baby.

In the absence of sufficient grass land, the Persians are obliged to sow grass for hay. The variety most universally cultivated is lucerne, "ynja" (*Medicago sativa*). It is harvested three times a year, and, once sown, can be continued on the same place fifteen years. Then, too, is to be found esparset (*epobrychis*), that grows well and that is used in medicine for rheumatism. In some moun-

tain regions, grain is sown in fields that are not artificially watered nor fertilised. Under such conditions, a field that yields three to four fold is considered poor. If his craft brings in five fold, a Persian will tell you that it is not bad—"bed neest." In the most fertile regions, as, for instance, the valley of Beramen near Teheran, where the fields receive artificial irrigation and fertilisation, the yield is from ten to twenty fold under favourable circumstances. The vegetable and fruit gardens are carefully cultivated, as are the vineyards. Booths are built for watchmen, scarecrows put up and a horse's skull fastened to a pole to keep off the evil eye. In case the watchman's vigilance be not sufficient, a paper is stuck up on which is written the punishment awaiting the thief in the next world according to the Koran, as well as a personal curse that the stealer of other people's good things may expect. There are three formidable foes to be faced by the Persian agriculturist: a snowless winter in the mountains, locusts, and the injustice and rapacity of his landlord. Experience has taught the inhabitants of each district how the snow lines on the mountains predict a dry summer; and if in the spring a sufficient fall of snow has not been marked, the price of grain goes up, whereas, on the contrary, if a good fall of snow comes the prices of all eatables drop.

Each village has its ketkhuda, who sees to the collecting of taxes and general order. Also a mirab, who oversees the fair distribution of water. The duties of the latter are by no means light. For the most frequent and violent quarrels, often ending in bloodshed, are traced to water. When one considers the high price on every "hour" it is easy to conceive how great is the temptation of landowners during the hot, dry season to steal a little water from his hour by the simple stroke of a spade or

TYPE OF DERVISH

by clearing away a few inches of earth and thus turning the stream into his own field. When we lived in Meshed we had large gardens about our city house and had the right of water all of Mondays. The stream that flowed through our garden had to come to us after passing through the gardens above us. Every little while our gardener would find his water supply cut off, and we would have to send to our neighbours, one after the other, until we traced the failure in the water supply to its cause. Hot words would be exchanged between our gardener and the offending persons, and the water would be turned on again, but hardly had our man resumed his work before the stream would again cease or dwindle to half the amount due us. As a failure to get our supply meant leaving the garden unwatered for a whole week, it was a serious matter, and Mondays were exciting days. If in spite of constant fighting we did not get our full share of water, our gardener the next day was sure to steal a little of the water as it passed through our grounds to our next neighbour, thereby bringing down upon us the angry visits of the neighbour below us. And this was only for pleasure gardens; but when it comes to rice and wheat fields, the year's food of the people, the fight for water rights is naturally a bitter one.

Persian cities, like all those of the East, are now too well known to the general reader to need a detailed description of the narrow, dirty streets inside the walled city or of the bazaars and cafés. In Persia, however, unlike Turkey, in spite of the unattractive appearance of the street there is much that is pleasant within the inhospitable-looking iron-studded door that is all that breaks the monotony of the walls. Once within, gardens of fruit and shade trees, roses and flower beds, watered by the running streams, are sure to be found. Poor indeed must be the

house that has not a few trees or bushes in the little court-yard. As a result Persian cities seem lost in a mass of green.

While overlooking the bazaars and other familiar Oriental scenes, I would dwell a little on the public baths, that have so important a place in every Persian town. They are generally large rambling buildings below the level of the street, with dome-shaped roofs studded with glass, so that the light falls from above. The entrance to a bath may always be recognised first by the long string of loin-cloths hung outside to dry, and second by the remarkable painting that adorns the niche above the door. This is always either a scene from the life of Rustam, or a very fierce soldier painted in the brightest colours, who has a very big moustache and in every case is wall-eyed or cross-eyed.

The bath is divided into several rooms, and one apartment is set aside for the operation of dyeing the hair. All Persians of both sexes dye the hair a bright black from the cradle. This is the explanation of the phenomenon noticed by so many travellers, namely, the absence of grey-haired people in Persia. This operation is performed at stated times once in four to six weeks, and is considered beneficent to the hair, a safeguard against undesirable inhabitants, and at the same time ornamental. If the time for dyeing the hair is allowed to pass, Persians affirm that headache and eye trouble result and that the habit once formed cannot be dropped.

The dye is prepared from the leaves of the *Lawsonia inermis,* and is known in Persia as henna. This plant is grown in the south of Persia. A paste is made of the powdered dried leaves of the *Lawsonia* and of warm water. This paste is well plastered over the hair, beard and such parts of the body as are to be dyed—the finger nails, palms of the hands, soles of the feet and toe nails.

The paste must remain on for two or three hours, during which time it is kept moist. At the expiration of the two hours the paste is carefully washed off, leaving a bright orange colour. The hands and feet are allowed to remain thus, but on the hair and beard another paste is applied made in the same manner but of the leaves of the *Indigofera,* a plant cultivated in Kerman. This paste is allowed to remain for another two hours, and when washed off the hair is found to be a beautiful shining black.

Some do not apply the second dye, leaving the beard an orange red, which one often sees in Persia. White sheep are occasionally dyed with henna; also the tails of all the shah's horses. Chestnut-coloured horses, even when owned by private individuals, generally have their tails dyed, but for horses of all other colours this privilege belongs only to those owned by the shah.

As the entire operation of dyeing the hair occupies five or six hours, the part of the bath used for this purpose is a regular club, as the Persians lunch here, tea and pipes are brought and the news of the day exchanged. This room is also a barber's shop, for before the dyeing the head is shaved and the beard trimmed. The ordinary Persian shaves a strip of about four fingers broad from the forehead right through to the neck. Mullahs, sayids and in general those wearing turbans shave the entire head. Only dancers and dervishes wear long hair, while Europeanised Persians do not shave the head at all.

The poorer classes have their barber's work done in the street wherever they may meet a perambulating barber, who is also a dentist.

Special hours are set apart each day for the women, and this is announced by the bathkeeper, who goes onto the roof and blows most dismally on a long horn.

In Persia no unbelievers are permitted to visit a Moslem bath, and I succeeded in doing so in a small town only

after much arguing with the bathkeeper. After a long time, and the exchange from my pocket to his of certain coins of the realm, he permitted me to do so, but under one condition—that I ride on the back of one of the stalwart bath boys, so as not to pollute the bath by my touch.

In the same humiliating manner I was enabled to visit the mosque of Ardabil and to see the now famous carpet, parts of which are, I believe, in the Kensington Museum. I was struck then by its beauty, but had I foreseen the fabulous price it brought years later, tattered as it was, I should have made an effort to raise the money for buying it, although I was then young and my pay but small.

Another characteristic of the Persian cities that should not be overlooked are the cemeteries. These are found where one would least expect them, namely, in the centre of the towns. They are not surrounded by fence or wall. They are a sort of open square over which to make short cuts when you walk or ride. They are the playgrounds of the poor children and the homes of packs of street dogs that often dig open the shallow graves. During the rainy season the water occasionally washes away the ground, forming hollows and holes through which the badly-made coffin, if there is one, or the swathed corpse, may be seen. It is unnecessary to say that the quarters of the city that surround these numerous cemeteries are the seat of much disease. In many of these graveyards something like temporary mausoleums are made to receive bodies that are eventually to be carried to Kerbela, Meshed, or some other sacred spot. To the same end many go so far as to bury their dead in their own garden or cellars until they can be removed. Foreign legations and consuls have much difficulty in persuading the authorities to prohibit this dangerous practice.

If possible the dead are always buried on the same day, and often within a very few hours after death has taken place. In a land where in many cases one room has to

serve as living and sleeping room for the whole family, this custom may have its advantages. But it also has its horrible side, for many cases have been known where the person was not really dead when buried. In the absence of skilled physicians this may easily happen, but little attention is paid to it and no measures of precaution are taken. Once the person ceases to breathe and becomes cold, the soul is supposed to have left the body, and can return only on the day of the last judgment. Therefore the possibility of a lethargy is not admitted.

I was told by reliable persons of a case that occurred in Ardabil sixty years ago. One evening a Persian passing through a cemetery distinctly heard cries issuing from a grave. At first he was so frightened that he started to run, but on second thought he called Allah to his aid and, approaching a grave, heard clearly calls for help issuing from it. As the grave was very shallow, he was able to dig it open with his hands and stick, and soon came to the coffin, from which he helped out a woman. He led her to her home, but her people refused to receive her. The unfortunate creature passed the night in the street, and on the following morning a large crowd escorted her to a Mudjtaheid, who read verses from the Koran proving that the dead do not rise until the last day and commanded her to be put to death and be buried again! Such facts could not take place now, of course, but that many instances occurred where persons supposed to have been dead were not so when buried, I can vouch for.

Maidans, or squares, are also inseparable from the Persian cities. They are generally situated in front of the governor's palace or artillery barracks. They serve for parades and executions and also in passing as a general rubbish heap, and here, as everywhere, are the miserable street dogs, whose lot is even worse than that of their brethren, the world-famed dogs of Constantinople.

CHAPTER XVII

THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN THE MOSLEM WORLD, ACCORDING TO THE TEACHINGS OF THE KORAN

Woman as a Creature Distinguished by her Love of Ornaments and Disputing without Reason—Woman as the Property of her Husband —Principle of Control over Woman as Found in the Koran—Are Women Admitted to Paradise?—Harems and their Exclusiveness—The Koran's View as to the Benefits of Marriage—Polygamy—Principle of Equality among Wives—Easiness of Divorce One of the Curses of Islamism—Property Rights of Women.

ONE may live years in the Moslem East without really getting at the life of the women. This is owing to their isolation, and to the tendency on the part of the men to hide their family life from all outside gaze. But there is a means other than personal observation by which the curtain may be drawn from the mysterious harem life, and by which a light may be thrown that at once brings out in bold relief the position of the women. This is the Koran, with its teachings concerning marriage, divorce laws, and the property rights of women. According to these laws the life of the Mohammmedan woman is regulated—be it in the deserts of Arabia, in the palaces of the Bosphorus, in the "urtas" of the Turkoman and Kirghiz, or in the villages of Kazan and Orinburgh provinces. There may be in these various places certain exceptions, or differences in the details as to the number of wives, laws governing divorce, etc., but these exceptions do not in the main change the position of woman as it is clearly defined in all Mohammedan countries.

First of all we see that the Koran looks upon woman as an imperfect, weak creature, standing on a lower plane than that occupied by man; as beings that are "brought up among ornaments and are contentious without cause" (Sura 43, verse 17). The same idea, as elaborated in another chapter, can be traced in the names of women and in the adjectives used to describe the sex.

Beginning from this view of woman and the statement that "the men ought to have a superiority over them" (Sura 2, verse 228), the Koran regards a woman as her husband's property, to be treated as he wills. "Your wives are your tillage; go in therefore to your tillage in what manner soever ye will." (Sura 22, verse 223.) Further in the 38th verse of the 4th Sura we find, "Men shall have the pre-eminence above women, because of those advantages wherein God hath caused the one of them to excel the other; and for that which they expend of their substance in maintaining their wives. The honest women are obedient, careful in the absence of their husbands, for that God preserveth them by committing them to the care and protection of the men. But those whose perverseness ye shall be apprehensive of rebuke; and remove them into separate apartments and chastise them. But if they shall be obedient unto you, seek not an occasion of quarrel against them; for God is high and great."

Once acknowledging in principle that "man is higher than woman," the logical sequence is that the Moslem law regards a woman as but half of a man. In the 2d Sura of the Koran we read, "And called to witness two witnesses of your neighbouring men: but, if there not be two men, let there be a man and two women of those whom ye shall choose for witnesses; if one of these women should mistake, the other of them will cause her to remember." If the witnesses be only women, however many, their testimony is not admitted.

Further, in the laws concerning the price of blood, just half the sum named for the murder of a man is given as the price of a woman's blood. In following out the idea of a woman's standing on a lower plane than a man we find that women do not as a rule share the titles of their husbands.

Are women admitted to Paradise? is a question that is often asked, and answered by most Europeans in the negative. We find, however, more than one passage in the Koran that distinctly speaks of a future life in Paradise for women. The most often quoted is the one promising the Faithful that he will meet in Paradise *besides his own earthly wives seventy-two houris*—not an attractive prospect for the poor women, who have suffered enough in this life from the humiliations of polygamy! But in the 4th Sura we find the following more definite statement: "But whoso doeth good works, whether he be male or female, and is a true believer, they shall be admitted into Paradise, and shall not in the least be unjustly dealt with."

The isolation and veiling of women was undoubtedly borrowed by Mohammed, as were so many other of his ideas, from the customs about him and the age in which he lived. The veiling of women and separate apartments for them are to be found both in Asia and in ancient Greece and Rome in times that date back to days long before Mohammed's teachings, or the Christian era. But that this idea found rich soil in the jealous and sensuous character of the Prophet is to be easily conceived. Although there is no absolute command about covering the face, the spirit of the teachings that lead to the veiling and isolation of women is found running through the Koran and the traditions of the sayings of Mohammed. For instance, we read in the 33d Sura, "And when ye ask of the Prophet's wives what ye may have occasion for, ask it of them from behind a curtain." And again, "O

PERSIAN WOMAN

Prophet, speak unto thy wives and thy daughters and the wives of the true believers that they cast their outer garments[1] over them when they walk abroad; this will be more proper, that they may be known to be matrons of reputation, and may not be affronted by unseemly words or actions. God is gracious and merciful." (Sura 33, verse 59.) In the 55th verse of the 23d Sura we read, "And speak unto the believing women that they restrain their eyes and preserve their modesty and discover not their ornaments except what necessarily appeareth thereof; and let them throw their veils over their bosoms and not show their ornaments except to their husbands, or their fathers, or their husband's fathers, or their sons, or their husband's sons, or their brothers, or their brother's sons, or their sister's sons, or their women, or the captives which their right hands shall possess, or unto such men as attend them and have no need of women; or unto children that distinguish not the nakedness of women."

Undoubtedly to such teachings must be laid the fact that to the present time in every country where Islamism is professed with any degree of strictness the veiling of women and their isolation are as much a part of their religion and life as are polygamy or pilgrimages. The movement among enlightened women of to-day which endeavors to prove that the Koran does not advocate the veiling of women is no doubt based more on the letter than on the spirit of Mohammedanism. Although there may be many worthy exceptions this attempt will raise strong opposers who cling to polygamy and to the isolation of women. My own opinion is that in spite of the brave stand that women are taking in try-

[1] The original word properly signifies the large wrappers, usually of white linen, with which the women in the East cover themselves from head to foot when they go abroad."—Footnote to Sales' translation of the Koran which is the one I have followed in the foregoing quotations.

ing to prove that they can have liberty and progress within the Islamic walls, they are mistaken. The rights of polygamy and its humiliating companions, the veiling and isolation of women, will always be found to go hand in hand with strict Mohammedanism.

Not only do Mohammedans, and the Persians in particular, demand that their women's faces be closely veiled, but they consider that even the accidental gaze of an outsider is a sin. Moreover, the husband never speaks of his wife to his acquaintances. If obliged to mention her it is by some other term than wife, as "mother of my son," or "my house." She must not exist for anyone but her husband, and from all others she must be hidden—non-existing. For this reason, when the harems of governors or very high personages pass through the streets of Persia, the men whom they meet either turn their backs or slip down a by-street or into some convenient doorway.

On the ground, then, of the interpretation of the spirit if not the letter of the Koran and its commentators, we find that in every country where the Mohammedans are scattered, isolation of women and their position as inferior beings are the chief features of their social organisations. Not one of the more definite commands of the Koran is as rigidly fulfilled as this. The harem is in every sense of the word the holy of holies of the Moslem world, that no individual or government can violate with impunity. If a police investigation is carried out, or a criminal sought, this is done so far as the doors of the harem, but farther than that they dare not go. The exceptional cases where this has been done have always been followed by more or less serious consequences.

The Shiites, more fanatical than the Sunnites in their dislike of having the yards of their harems overlooked

from higher roofs, object to minarets.[1] This picturesque addition to Turkish villages and cities is therefore never seen in Persia, the call for prayer being made from the flat roofs of the mosques.

Having admitted the principle of polygamy, the Koran has a good deal to say on the benefits of the married state. In the 32d verse of the 24th Sura we find the following injunction: "Marry those who are single among you and such as are honest of your men servants and your maid servants: if they be poor, God will enrich them of his abundance: for God is bounteous and wise." In another place the Koran enjoins all to marry and found families, and adds that bachelors are the worst of mankind.

With this view of marriage we find Mohammedans marrying their young people as early in life as possible, with no regard as to whether they have the means to do so, basing their claim for God's aid upon the above quoted verses about God's enriching the poor.

In justifying polygamy they turn to the words found in the 4th Sura and 3d verse: "And if ye fear that ye shall not act with equity towards orphans of the female sex, take in marriage of such other women as please you, two, or three or four, and not more. But if ye fear that ye cannot act equitably toward so many, marry one only or the slaves that ye have acquired."

The above also shows us that more than four wives are forbidden from the fear of unequal treatment of so many; but if this fear does not exist one can infer the lawfulness of adding to this number. The Prophet himself set the example by taking a greater number, though some theologians regard that as a privilege granted to him alone. The four wives do not include the slave

[1] In the rare instances where minarets are found in Persia, they are generally for ornament, and not for the muezzin to ascend.

women, and the Shiites in particular have many means of evading the limitation by resorting to different forms or degrees of marriage, which will be enlarged upon in another chapter.

Mohammed clearly enjoins equality in the treatment of the various wives without showing partiality to any one. That he realises, however—probably from his own sad experience—the difficulty of carrying out this principle we find from the words given in the 128th verse of the 4th Sura: "Ye can by no means carry yourselves equally between women in all respects, although ye study to do so; therefore turn not from a wife with all manner of aversion, nor leave her like one in suspense; if ye agree and fear to abuse your wives, God is gracious and merciful; but if they separate God will satisfy them both of his abundance."

Although, therefore, all Moslem husbands try to furnish their wives with equal surroundings, servants, clothing, etc., exceptions must arise. The human failings lead to favouritism; wives of different rank demand different treatment, and the obligation of the husband towards a wife of another religion is regarded as a half of what he owes to his Mohammedan wives. The Mohammedan men are forbidden to force their non-Mohammedan wives to fulfil the rites of the Mohammedan religion, but they have the right to demand that such wives shall abstain from acts that are forbidden by the Mohammedan religion, as drinking wine, frequenting a church or synagogue, or going out unveiled. The husband can always enforce his authority in these respects by simply keeping the wife locked at home.

The Koran and all theological teachers regard divorce very lightly, on the ground that the divorced parties can soon find themselves other partners. In the case of divorcing a wife it is forbidden to take from her what has been

PERSIAN WOMAN DRAWING ON THE OUT-DOOR TROUSERS

given to her. In the 24th verse of the 4th Sura we read: "If ye be desirous to exchange a wife for another wife, and ye have already given one of them a talent, take not away anything therefrom; will ye take it by slandering her and doing her manifest injustice?" Once admitting the legality of divorce for trifling reasons, the theologians, or Moslem commentators, have carried this license much further.

A study of the laws governing divorce cannot but convince one that all the arguments given are to support two conditions, namely, facilitation of divorce for men, and difficulties of obtaining the same for women; and secondly, protection of the husband from any attempt on the part of the wife to get him to support a child about his being the father of which there might be doubt. In view of this last clause a certain "period of proof" is appointed for a divorced woman before she may marry again. All the laws concerning divorce fall with greatest weight on the women. *It is not only polygamy that is the curse of Mohammedan countries, but the facility with which a husband may even at a caprice divorce his wife.*

In regard to a woman's being unfaithful to her marriage vows, the Moslem law is more severe than the Koran, though the latter is sufficiently cruel, as we find in the 4th Sura, 19th verse: "If any of your women be guilty of whoredom, produce four witnesses from among you against them, and if they bear witness against them imprison them in separate apartments until death release them, or God afford them a way to escape." In the 2d verse of the 24th Sura we read: "The whore and whoremonger shall ye scourge with an hundred stripes, and let not compassion towards them prevent you from executing the judgment of God if ye believe in God and the last day."

The laws laid down by theologians, being stricter than those of the Koran, ordained that the four witnesses hav-

ing testified to the unchastity of a married woman she is to be stoned to death. Even the details are described. The woman is to be buried in the ground up to the waist. If her guilt has been proved by the testimony of witnesses they are to throw the first stones. If she herself has confessed, the judge who pronounces the sentence casts the first stone. For the same offence in an unmarried woman the first misdeed is punished by one hundred stripes, the second by two hundred stripes and the third by death.

Time has of course softened these punishments. We do not hear of stoning an adulteress, but the spirit remains, and many punishments are meted out within the walls of the harems that get outside only in whispers, and society and the authorities "look through their fingers."

As recently as some fifty years ago women were thrown from the citadel of Tabriz as punishment for immorality. In Shiraz, within five hundred paces of the tomb of one of Persia's most popular classical poets, Saadi, is a well into which women used to be thrown. The depth of this well, according to a European physician living in Shiraz, is so great that one can count fifteen before a stone dropped down touches the first irregularity in the side of the well. There is at the present day a tower in Bokhara that is shown to travellers as the place from which women were thrown before the Russian occupation of Transcaspia.

Such are some of the dumb witnesses of women's lot in Mohammedan lands, and though time and advancing civilisation have made such public executions impossible, it does not follow that all these punishments have been abolished. What stories could the Bosphorus tell, and other places affording convenient and natural means of concealing the secrets of the harem, without the trouble of building towers or digging wells!

The property rights of women are stated in the 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th and 175th verses of the 4th Sura. I shall

quote them in their entirety, as these form the basis of the laws concerning heredity, a more detailed examination of which would occupy too much space.

Verse 12. "God hath thus commanded you concerning your children. A male shall have as much as the share of two females; but if they be females only and above two in number they shall have two-thirds parts of what the deceased shall leave; and if there be but one she shall have the half. And the parents of the deceased shall each have a sixth part of what he shall leave, if he have a child, but if he have no child and his parents be his heirs, then the mother shall have the third part. And if he have brethren, his mother shall have a sixth part, after the legacies which he shall bequeath and his debts be paid. Ye know not whether your parents or your children be of greater use unto you. This is an ordinance of God, and God is knowing and wise."

Verse 13. "Moreover, you may claim half of what your wives shall leave if they have no issue; but if they have issue then ye shall have the fourth part of what they shall leave, after the legacies which they shall bequeath and the debts shall be paid."

Verse 14. "They also shall have the fourth part of what you shall leave in case you have no issue; but if you have issue then they shall have the eighth part of what ye shall leave after the legacies which ye shall bequeath and the debts be paid."

Verse 15. "And if a man or woman's substance be inherited by a distant relation, and he or she have a brother or sister, each of them too shall have a sixth part of the estate. But if there be more than this number they shall be equal sharers in a third part, after payment of the legacies which shall be bequeathed and the debts without prejudice to the heirs."

Verse 175. "But if there be two sisters they shall have

between them two-thirds parts of what he shall leave; and if there be several, both sisters and brothers, a male shall have as much as the portion of two females. God declareth unto you these precepts, lest ye err: and God knoweth all things."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN PERSIA

Costumes of City and Village Women—Beroun and Enderoun—Harem Servants—Occupation of Women—Superstitions—Excursions—Visiting Shrines—Education of Women—Betrothals—Weddings—Various Forms of Marriage—A Wife Agdé and Segé—Monogamy and the Reason for its Preponderance—Marriage with Slaves—Marriage—Marriages with Christians—Position of Christian Wives in Harems—Marriage of Mohammedan Women with non-Mohammedans Forbidden—Divorce the Husband's Privilege—Uncertain Position of the Woman in her Husband's House—Harem Intrigues—Powers of Persians as Husbands and Fathers.

ON entering a Persian city, the European is first of all struck with the sight of figures swathed in dark blue with veils over their faces, and below the blue mantle glimpses of broad sharwars and short high-heeled slippers that flap with each step, and cause a swaying, tottering gait. These figures are Persian women.

It is difficult to imagine a more uncomfortable costume than that of the Persian woman, both indoors and in the street. The house dress consists of short and very full skirts hardly reaching the knee. The fuller the skirts are and the greater number of them worn, the more "chic" the wearer is considered. Sometimes under these skirts tight-fitting drawers are worn that reach to the ankle. More often, especially in summer, the legs are bare down to the short socks. A loose blouse-like shirt is worn very short, and often of almost transparent material. Over this is a short jacket, open in front, having long tight sleeves. This jacket lends itself to great decoration among the rich,

the material generally being of velvet or silk lavishly braided, embroidered or trimmed with seed pearls. On the head is a simple kerchief adorned with fancy aigrettes or not, according to the social position of the woman. A light veil of muslin, cambric or silk is generally thrown over all, even in the house. The hair is parted smoothly, drawn back and braided in many fine braids and left hanging down the back. Of ornaments, earrings, bracelets on the arms and ankles, necklaces, nose-rings and finger-rings are worn, also jewels are mounted in buckles for belts. Turquoise and carnelians are the most commonly worn, as they are considered lucky stones, though many harems can boast of magnificent emeralds, rubies and pearls. In the winter a long, frocked coat of cloth or "shawl" is worn in the house. The Persian shawl material is greatly prized, and fine specimens are handed down in a family as "heirlooms."

The street costume consists of three articles worn over the house dress. The full skirts are first tucked into long full trousers, to each leg of which a sock of the same material is sewn. Over the head and falling to the feet is worn the "chadir," or veil or mantle, of dark blue. Over this about the forehead is fastened a long narrow strip of cotton about the breadth of a towel, that falls over the face nearly to the ground. Just over the eyes is a bit of drawn open-work. In the hot weather this costume is stifling and uncomfortable, and at the best of times the poor women can see little through the embroideries.

The slippers are high-heeled leather ones, turned up at the toes, and so short that they barely reach beyond the middle of the foot, and the effort made to keep them on makes the woman's gait more of a shuffle than a walk.

In this costume the disguise of a woman is so perfect that her own husband can hardly recognise her. A man will rarely be seen in the street with his wife, being con-

trary to Moslem etiquette, and if he does happen to accompany her he will never walk by her side, but either in advance or behind her.

On passing a European, if sure that none of her co-religionists see her, a woman, particularly if she be young and good-looking, will often raise her veil, from under which a pair of dark eyes follow the stranger with a curious gaze.

Women of the lower class wear longer skirts, long trousers, and a bit of muslin or calico thrown over their head as veils.

Powder and rouge are much used, and the eyes and eyebrows blackened, the latter very heavily, and are made to meet over the nose. In former years most women tattooed, but this practice has gone out of use.

The Persian, be he poor or rich, settled or nomadic, has his women folk more or less isolated and his dwelling divided into the men's and women's quarters.

In the women's part of the house, the servants are all female, with the exception of the eunuchs, and possibly dwarfs. The eunuchs, aside from acting as guards and escorts in the streets, are the settlers of disputes, and act as messengers between the women and the husband when he is in the men's apartments.

In the harem are often to be found pages of from eleven to fifteen years of age, "gulaf-bacha" boys, often of very good families, who are placed in influential Persian houses. These boys often serve the master in another capacity, and even sometimes the ladies also, which leads to stories of the darkest and most scandalous part of the harem life.

Each wife according to the law is entitled to a separate house and household. This is not, however, always found to be so in practice. Occasionally when means permit the several wives have quite separate residences. Again, one

finds separate small houses in one large courtyard, or different apartments in the same house.

The occupation of the women depends upon the social position of the husband. In the poorer families the women do the household work and attend to the milking and dairy work generally. The field work is done entirely by the men. To be just, one must give the Persians the credit of being logical. Acknowledging the woman to be the weaker vessel, they never put the hard physical work upon her, and so the women of the lower classes have their family and house to look after, while those of the upper classes have their toilet, visiting, light needlework, and, in rare cases, reading, to occupy them. The latter kill time by giving their attention to the adornment of their persons, smoking, eating sweets, listening to story tellers and musicians, making calls and going to the bath. The baths are the nearest approach to clubs that they have, and here they spend hours, dyeing their hair with henna, which takes hours, and in the meantime gossiping with their acquaintances.

When making calls the rich ladies go in carriages or horseback, riding astride, accompanied by eunuchs, maids, and men servants. The poorer classes go alone. They have considerable liberty in going out for calls or to the bazaar, and, during Muharram, to attend the "tazie," or mystery plays. They are very fond also of visiting shrines or holy places, that are to be found near all large cities. It is said, but I have no proof of it, that these religious visits are often masks for love intrigues. Near the shrines are always to be found rooms that can be engaged for a day, or longer or shorter time, and it is quite possible that Persian ladies sometimes take advantage of these places, the more so that once on the street the Persian woman runs little risk of being recognised even by her own husband. They also love to go to physicians to talk at length

of their ills, and beg for love potions or some beautifying elixir.

The education of the Persian woman rarely rises to anything higher than the arts of reading and writing, acquaintance with the prayers and poets and in elegant conversation and deportment. Singing, dancing and music are not taught, as these are not approved of by the Koran nor by etiquette, and special professional dancers and musicians are for hire.

The chief characteristic of the Persian woman is superstition, which is quite comprehensible in a people whose calendar possesses lucky and unlucky days. They all firmly believe in charms and the effects of the "good" or "evil eye," especially in love affairs. To keep the love of their husbands they often resort to wearing strange amulets, as, for instance, the claws of hyenas, or an amulet fastened about the arm just below the shoulder that contains some written verses from the Koran. Jealousy often leads one wife to give to another wife remedies that, according to their belief, will render her childless.

Maidens wishing to get married visit the tomb of some sacred woman, usually the sister of one of the imams. There are many such tombs, and most of them are considered as the patrons of virgins. Marriages are contracted very early. The rich may marry their sons at the age of fifteen or sixteen to temporary wives, "segé," and at the age of nineteen to twenty to permanent wives or "agdé." Sometimes, owing to family reasons, one hears of a youth of fifteen or sixteen married to a girl much older. The marriageable age for a girl is fixed at nine.

It is not infrequent to meet in Persia, particularly in the southern parts, women of twenty-eight or thirty who are grandmothers. Of love there can be, of course, no thought. The more so that love as a lofty moral sentiment as we understand it is unknown to the Persians.

Love as sung by the poets of the golden age is a sensuous passion, and one not always inspired by women.

The marriage contract is always made out in Arabic according to a set form, and for which the consent of both parties is obligatory. An auspicious day is chosen—for during the month of Muharram, during fasts, and when the moon is in the sign of the scorpion, no marriages can be performed. Two witnesses are demanded, but their absence does not hinder the ceremony, providing all the other formalities are observed. If one or both of the contracting parties be minors, the contract is signed for them by the father, brother, or guardian. Such contracts are as binding as if made out between persons who are of age, and they cannot be annulled when the parties reach their majority on the ground of its having been made out when they were minors.

Slaves may marry a slave, or a free woman, but always with the consent of their masters.

Although the Shariat regards as legal only such marriages as are contracted by the free will of both parties, the consent of parents and guardians is sufficient in the case of very early marriages. This is made the more binding that the influence of parents over their children is enormous. They can even sell their children into slavery, which frequently happens among nomadic tribes without being considered disgraceful. If often happens that parents betroth children who are yet in the cradle. Sweetmeats are eaten—" Sheerenie huran "—corresponding to our betrothal ceremony, and the given promise is sacredly carried out when the children grow up.

Marriages are generally arranged in the following way: A man, becoming enamoured of the beauty of a damsel as described to him by a sister or other female friend, obtains, through women again, the consent of the girl's father. The latter if favourably inclined towards

the match will, in most cases, give the love-sick suitor the chance of seeing the lady's face. Then follow the conditions of the marriage contract, the sum to be paid to the bride's mother by the suitor—"Sherie bega"—trosseau, etc. Then friends are invited to eat sweets and the coming marriage is announced.

On the appointed day, the groom and his friends repair to the bride's house—the men in the beroun, the women in the enderoun—and the marriage contract is drawn up, with the bride's representative to answer for her. Occasionally she, herself veiled, stands behind a curtain, and the mullah in repeating the formula turns in the direction where he has been told she is, but without seeing her. Then a prayer is read, and a few words said as to the sacredness and obligations of the marriage vows, and in about ten minutes all is over.

Then begin the entertainments, lasting from two to ten days, according to the wealth and position of the parties. All this time the young people do not see each other and the bride remains in her father's house. The bride's trousseau is taken in great pomp with music to the bridegroom's house. Long lines of men with trays on their heads carry such articles as crystal, lamps, etc. Horses and mules are loaded with boxes containing the remainder of the trousseau, and all is brought into the enderoun and shown to the assembled guests. The taking of the bridegroom's presents to the bride's house is accompanied by the same ceremonies. On the last day of the celebrations, the bride is escorted at night with music and torches to her husband's house, where, as on the day of signing the contract, various rites not enjoined by the Shariat are observed.

According to the Shariat there are two forms of marriage, either the permanent one, when a wife is known as an "agdé," or a temporary arrangement with the

length of time from an hour to ninety-nine years indicated. Such wives are termed segés, and the number of such wives that a man may have is unlimited. As both forms of marriage are considered equally binding, the children of both have equal rights. By establishing the institution of "segé" the Shariat gets around the limitations of four wives, for the "segé" who is contracted for ninety-nine years passes from the segé du jure to the agdé *de facto*. In entering upon the permanent marriage with one who was a temporary wife the man is obliged only to pay the woman the sum named in the contract as due her after the end of the term. The sum to be paid is decided by common consent, as the Shariat says nothing of the minimum or maximum amount to be given. If the "segé" wife leaves her husband before the time named in the contract, she forfeits all right to payment. Frequently the poor women are obliged to do this owing to the cruel treatment of the husbands, who take this means of avoiding payment.

Availing themselves of this privilege, Persians who spend some time in distant cities, where they have business or where they have gone on a pilgrimage, enter into temporary matrimony. In cities like Meshed, where many thousand pilgrims congregate, a flourishing business is carried on by mullahs, who have a large number of women living in their houses ready to be married. The mullah on finding a candidate for his protégé's hand gets paid for the marriage contract as well as for her board while she lived in his house. At the end of the term, and having received from her husband the promised sum, the woman returns to the house of her spiritual benefactor and impatiently awaits the expiration of the four months that must pass before a new contract can be concluded. This term is, however, not always as strictly observed as it should be. The Shariat permits a woman's marrying

only three times, but the obliging mullahs are always ready to overlook such a small matter.

Polygamy cannot be said to be the universal custom in Persia. The majority have but one wife, and as living becomes more expensive, the number of those able to support more than one family decreases. The nomads, representing about one-quarter of the inhabitants of Persia, the agricultural class, small shopkeepers and the poorer people generally content themselves with one wife. The higher nobility also give many examples of monogamy, as in many cases they are married to princesses and therefore do not dare to take other wives. A man who voluntarily or by order of the shah marries a princess, divorces all his former wives. As to the khans, princes, landowners, sons of semi-independent chiefs, and rich merchants, these are nearly all polygamists.

The laws governing the treatment of the various wives, as given in the 128th verse of the 4th Sura and quoted above, have done much to decrease polgamy. Those wishing to live according to the Shariat are obliged to keep up separate households for each wife and to have in every way the material conditions of all the wives equal. In many old Persian harems this is carried out with pedantic exactness, but with the extravagance of the Persian ladies, such households can only be maintained by the very rich.

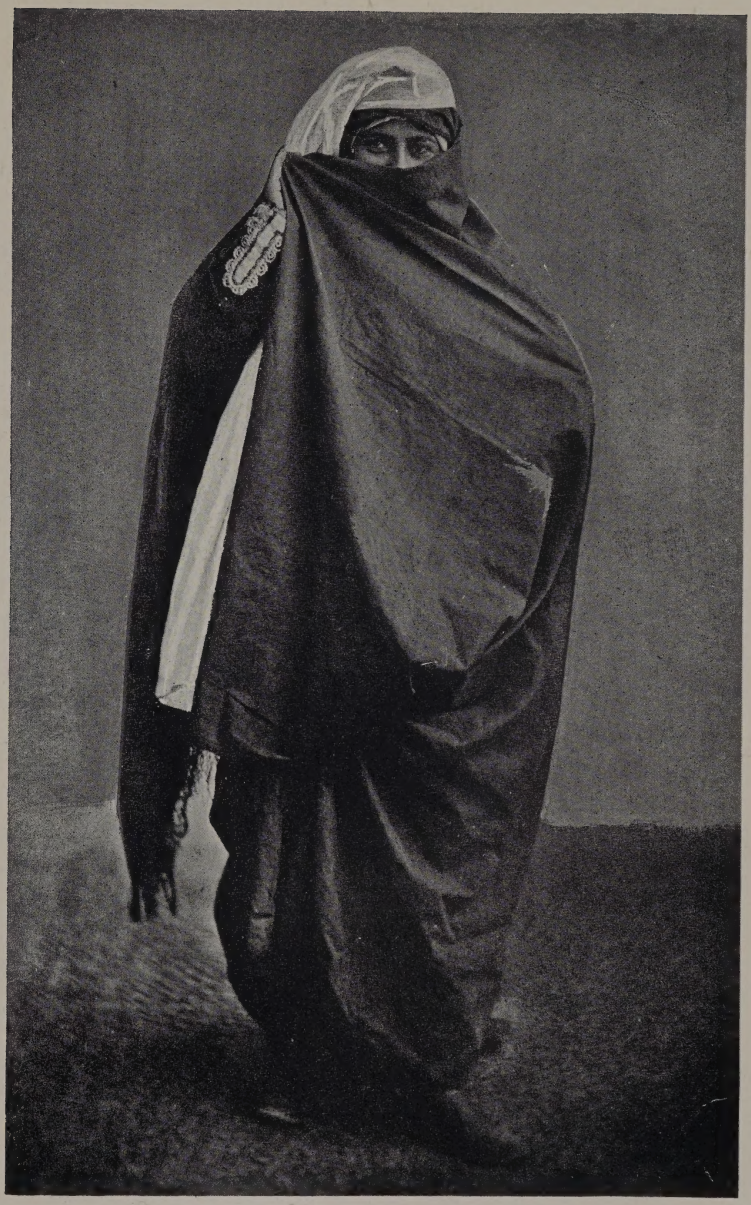
Aside from the wives agdé and segé, who may also be taken from among the slaves, it is permissible to have simple concubines to any number. This is done in following the example of Mohammed, who limited himself to nine wives, but added concubines. This is to be understood from 33d Sura: "O Prophet, we have allowed thee thy wives unto whom thou hast given their dower, and also the slaves which thy right hand possesseth of the booty which God had granted thee, and the daughters of thy

uncles, and the daughters of thy aunts, both on thy father's side and on thy mother's side, who have fled with thee to Mecca, and any other believing woman if she give herself unto the Prophet, in case the Prophet desireth to take her to wife. This is a peculiar privilege granted unto thee above the rest of the true believers."

A marriage with slaves may be also as a permanent wife agdé or as a segé, and is in every detail similar to contracts made with free women, with the one condition that if the man already has a wife who is a free woman her consent is necessary to the new marriage. A slave woman on marrying her master still remains in bondage unless the marriage contract contains a clause that declares her free. Otherwise, she can only hope to obtain her freedom after her husband's death, and in case she has a son, on whom lies the obligation of buying his mother's freedom from his inheritance. If he be unable to raise the whole of the necessary sum, the mother tries to earn the balance. If the child born to the slave woman dies during her husband's lifetime she remains a slave and can be sold.

There remains one other form of marriage existing that is not given either in the Koran or the Shariat and yet is practised in Persia. This is a contract between bachelors and women who are deprived of the hope of becoming mothers, "yaesé"—hopeless. In this case the religious ceremony performed by a mullah is unnecessary. A certain formula is simply repeated by both, naming the sum decided by mutual consent and the duration of the term of marriage—from hours or days, to months—upon which they have agreed. At the end of the term, the couple separate and the "yaesé" is again free to marry in the same way. Such partnerships are looked upon as being quite honourable.

As to marriages between persons professing different religions, the men are permitted to marry wives of any



PERSIAN LADY RAISING HER VEIL

faith except idolaters. This is based on the 7th verse of the 5th Sura: "And ye are also allowed to marry free women that are believers, and also free women of those who have received the scriptures before you."

The Mohammedan women, however, are forbidden on pain of death to marry anybody but Mohammedans. Instances where Moslems have married Christian women are far from being rare. Taking advantage of the ignorance prevailing in Europe regarding the real life in Persia, many have succeeded in persuading European girls to marry them. The fate of a Christian woman getting in this way into the Persian harem is almost without any exception insufferable. She is treated with contempt and dislike by all the other women, and she is obliged to take her position as the wife of a Mohammedan: that is, to go out in the street veiled from head to foot, and to give up all the freedom she has been accustomed to enjoy. I have known of more than one such unfortunate being, who has succeeded in escaping to the protection of a foreign legation or consulate, or at least in giving information of their condition. In the latter case it is almost hopeless to attempt to help such women to escape, for it is impossible to gain access into the "holy of holies" of the Moslem world, the enderoun. Great skill, patience and diplomacy sometimes lead to success. Two Armenian girls were in this way rescued from harems in Tabriz; but generally the women tire of the conflict, and end by embracing Islamism and are forever lost to their homes.

One European woman who became a Moslem won for herself a certain position in Teheran society. She was a French flower girl from the Quartier Latin in Paris and found her way to Teheran in the twenties of the last century. Here she married, became Mohammedan, and finally as a widow received a considerable pension and was known as "Hadji Abbas Hanum" (Madame Hadji Abbas). She died in Teheran in 1881 at a very great age.

The Persians keep a jealous watch on their women, that there should be no chance of their breaking the commandment by marrying unbelievers. When such cases do occur, both parties are in danger of death. Not many years ago, a fanatical crowd killed an Armenian who had married a Mohammedan girl, and his body lay a long time unburied in the street. The woman was stoned to death.

The only way of escape is by promising to espouse Islamism, and the promise has to be kept. Renegades of this kind are often to be found in Persia, and they are most frequently Russian subjects. Some of these men manage to return in time to their own country, others remain Persians for life. The fear of such marriages makes Persians very unwilling to have their women work in Christian families, and it is only in a few places where there are many Europeans, and the people have become less fanatical, that it is possible to induce Mohammedan women to work in Christian houses.

The fact of polygamy being comparatively uncommon in Persia does not, however, make the woman's lot any easier, owing to the facility with which her husband can divorce her. This "Damocles sword" is forever hanging over the head of the poor woman. Anyone living in Persia is struck by the frequency with which men change wives. That is to say, they divorce one wife and marry another, often simply because the years had begun to tell on their former life's companion. "While I was young and my husband was poor, I was good in his eyes, now I am growing old, and I have no sons, only daughters, and my husband has become rich, he does not need me any more." This is the bitter plaint that I have heard from more than one poor woman. With some variations in the details this is indeed an oft-repeated tale. A poor man marries a poor girl. He gets on in life and arrives at a position where he could make a better match. His

means, however, do not yet permit of his keeping up two households, so he divorces the humble wife who was good enough for his poor days and marries one fitting his present condition.

The forms of divorce, "tellyak," are various (tellyak-el-baien, tellyak-el-redji, tellyak-el uddet, etc.), and differ in their results and in the formalities with which they are accompanied. For instance, under the form known as "tellyak-el-baien" the husband cannot remarry the divorced wife. In the form known as "redji" he reserves to himself this right. In the case of the divorce "uddet" he can also take advantage of this right, but only after a certain lapse of time. Not going into the details governing each of these forms, I will merely mention the cases where divorce can be obtained.

1. The divorce that follows the termination of the marriage contract with a segé wife.

2. Divorce by mutual consent.

3. Divorce by the desire of one of the parties, based on the same grounds as those that govern divorce in European countries, with this exception, that it is far more difficult for the woman to get a divorce than for the man.

4. Divorce as claimed on account of one of the parties adopting another religion, or if the marriage was based upon deceit, as if, for instance, a slave had given himself out as being a free man and had married a free-born woman.

5. Divorce by desire of the husband. This is the form most often resorted to, and is exceedingly easy to obtain.

6. Divorce given to the wife by the husband, under which condition he pays her a certain sum.

A woman may obtain a divorce against her husband's will only in very exceptional circumstances. The husband can, on the other hand, at any moment free himself of his wife, even against her will, on condition of his paying her

a certain sum, and taking charge of the children that belong to him after the second year. The divorced pair may remarry as many as three times, after which in order to marry for the fourth time the woman must first marry another man, and only on being divorced from him can she marry her former husband again. Sometimes the literal fulfilment of this law is evaded by appealing to a friend, who consents to go through the form of marriage ceremony in the presence of the mullah, and then without leaving the room he declares that he divorces his newly wedded wife. After a certain period she is considered free to marry her own husband!

The children of all wives, be they agdé, segé, or slaves, have equal rights. The child of a segé is regarded as legitimate if born not later than ten months after the expiration of the term of her marriage. The laws governing the parentage of children born of a slave are given in great detail. In difficult cases, where owing to the change of owners it is impossible to determine the father of the child, the question is settled by drawing lots.

I once had the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the sad lot of the Persian women. A Mohammedan woman who came under the jurisdiction of a foreign power appealed to her legation. This was probably the first case that a Persian woman appealed before a European court. She entered wrapped in her "chadir," or veil, and seated herself on the floor. Near her were seated women who had been summoned as witnesses from both sides. At first she was evidently embarrassed and spoke in so low a voice as to be scarcely heard. As she became accustomed to her surroundings, her courage rose, and finally throwing back her veil she spoke freely and with a logic and eloquence that astonished us all. She seemed to be not more than sixteen or seventeen years old, but no

European woman in her position and of more than her age could have defended her case better than she did. Quite unconsciously to herself, she laid before us the whole dark drama of a Persian woman's existence. All that she pleaded for was that her husband grant her a divorce without any payment or further support. The husband, a fanatical old Persian, was determined not to give up his rights, and as her claims could not be supported by the Shariat, there was no help for her. What her final fate was, I never knew.

Although polygamy, as shown above, is almost oftener the exception than the rule, the condition of women, owing to the ease with which their husbands may divorce them, and the difficulty with which they can obtain freedom, is none the better. They are always in fear of divorce, or of a rival that will lead to it. Of course, in Persia as elsewhere, there are cases where the man is "under the slipper" of his wife, but I doubt if such cases are not oftener due to outside influence, as family or money pressure, rather than to personal predominance. The husband's attitude toward his wife or wives is *de jure* and *de facto* that of lord and master—"aga."

In the first place the husband holds over his wife the fear of divorce; in the second, according to the teaching of the Shariat and Oriental etiquette, the husband regards his wife not as his life companion, the sharer of all his joys and sorrows, but as his property, something belonging to him. The wife knows this very well. So long as she is young and good-looking, she can hold her husband's affection, but in Persia women age early. At thirty she has passed her prime, and she realises the uncertainty of her tenure. From these circumstances arise the two passions of the Persian woman: to keep her beauty, and to prepare for a "rainy day." The first leads her to buy

cosmetics and to seek for talismans, etc.; the second to coax her husband to buy her shawls, ornaments, and also to hoard all money that comes her way.

The condition of the several wives is of course even worse. It is impossible for Europeans to wholly enter into a knowledge of their intimate relations, but we know enough of the jealousy and heart-burn that lead to some of the darkest pages in the sad drama of harem life. Although the Koran decrees absolute equality in the husband's treatment of his several wives, this is totally impossible, as even Mohammed himself confesses. One of the greatest sources of trouble is the absence of children or the birth of only daughters. The birth of a son may at once change the position of the humblest wife and make her the favourite. The head wife generally keeps the others in subjection, and influences the husband's attitude towards them. It often happens that when the chief wife feels that her power over her husband is passing with her youth, she continues her influence over him by selecting other wives for him and thus by presenting them to him maintains her position while making a *bonne mine à mauvais jeu.*

It is evident, therefore, that there must be constant jealousy, distrust and suspicion among the wives, who keep watch over each other, and especially over their children. This latter precaution is not caused by imaginary fears—dark stories could be told of crimes committed by barren wives towards other wives expecting to become mothers or towards the sons born to these rivals. Poison is often resorted to in the harems, and advantage is taken of cholera, when the symptoms caused by arsenic and other poisons may easily pass for that disease. Owing to the inaccessibility of the harems, suspicion can never be followed up by investigations.

Once a young woman came to me to complain of her

husband, who had taken a third young wife and had driven her, the first, into the street. During the examination that followed I endeavoured to get the husband to at least pay his wife the sum of money to which she had the legal right. The husband was a very respectable man, and in answer to my arguments he suddenly exclaimed, "Don't try to defend her, Sahib, she is not worth it; she has poisoned both the children of my other wives!"

The power of the men as husbands and fathers is enormous. The Koran gives them the right to administer corporal punishment to their wives, and the Shariat confirms it and even upholds him guiltless in certain cases of the murder of his wife.

De jure of course the husband has no right, except in the one instance, to take his wife's life, and any Persian with whom you may speak will hotly contest what I have said. But facts are to the contrary: not only the husband but often the eldest of the family will take the life of wife, or sister, if he considers she deserves it.

Nothing is so humiliating to a Persian, and so excites him, as the slightest sign of not only actual indiscretion on the part of the women of his household, but even an attempt on their part to deviate from the strict barriers that surround them. The sense of duty, morality and patriotism is foreign to the Persian's character, but where the reputation of his womenkind is concerned, the Persian is very sensitive. This becomes a point of honour, not only to the husband or male relatives of the women in question, but to every man, as each true believer for some reason seems to regard himself as the guardian of female chastity. To prove my point, I can cite one or two instances that came within my personal observation.

The summer resort of the Russian legation is situated some six miles outside of the city of Teheran in the village

of Zergendé. In the year 1880 an inhabitant of that village shot his sister, whom he suspected of improper conduct. Everyone knew of this murder, but no one had the right to interfere nor even to inform the authorities of what, in the eyes of public opinion, was a deed that the brother was justified in committing. In the same year a similar case occurred in the small village of Naamat-Abad, where Europeans and Persians go in the summer months. A Persian khan became acquainted with one of the village women, who from time time went secretly to his house. One day a man in no way related to her discovered their secret. Lying in wait at the khan's door, he stabbed the woman to death when she came out. In this case they went so far as to arrest the man, but he was permitted to " escape " and continued to live unmolested.

I knew of another case where a Persian woman was brought to the house of a man in a bag in which straw is usually carried, and on its being known, she too was killed by a Persian who was a stranger to her.

Instances of this kind are very frequent. In spite of such dangers, in spite of the Shariat, and the thick walls of the harem, women often manage to betray their husbands. In moments of frankness and through satirical folk-stories, one can see that this is the case owing to the absence of anything like a sense of honour, or appreciation of the sacred duties of the marriage bond. But rather than condemn, one wonders, in view of the low plane on which the Koran and Shariat place women, that there should be so many instances of true love and fidelity on the part of Persian women towards their husbands. And such instances also are very many. I will cite one case that took place in 1861 and is given by Brugsch in his "Reise nach Persien." Passing through the streets of Teheran one day, a young Persan caught a glimpse of

the face of a woman who in arranging her draperies lifted her veil for a moment. The beauty of the face was such that the young man fell violently in love, or to use the Persian expression, "his heart turned into a kebab" (roast meat). He followed the destroyer of his peace and discovered that she was the wife of a rich merchant. With the help of money, he got an old woman to entice the lady —who had no suspicion of the passion she had aroused— to her house. Once there, the poor creature could neither leave nor let her husband know of the treachery to which she had been subjected.

Rather than submit to the caresses of the stranger, she poisoned herself with opium, a drug that many Persians, being in the habit of taking daily in small doses, carry with them. The husband succeeded in tracing his wife, but found only her corpse. The author of the tragedy was arrested and sentenced to execution by beheading. The sentence was to be carried out in one of the most populous squares of Teheran. When the executioner began his preparations, he hesitated, whether from a feeling of pity or because he was a novice, no one knows. However that may be, his hesitation was noticed by a "lootie" (huligan, loose character) in the crowd, who offered his services as executioner for the sum of one kran, about ten cents! He cut off the man's head, and three day later he himself was sentenced to having his right hand cut off for taking upon himself the office of executioner. The old woman who was the accomplice in the crime was thrown down from a high tower.

The power of a man is great not only as a husband, but as a father as well. During his lifetime the property of his son is considered his. Among the higher classes, sons treat their fathers with great veneration, not even daring to seat themselves nor to smoke in their presence without permission.

The women have little influence as mothers, especially over the sons. Among the lower classes, the mothers nurse their children until the age of two or more years. Among the higher classes, a wet nurse is at once taken, for the mothers prefer being free to bear children rather than to nurse them, as the mother of sons has the most hope of holding her husband's affections. When a wet nurse is taken, she is honoured almost as a mother by her foster-child. Even the Koran admits the obligations of this tie by forbidding marriage between foster-brother and sister. The children are brought up in a primitive way, without any regular moral or physical training. They live mostly out of doors, and the mothers take their children with them everywhere, to the bath, in making calls, or to the bazaars. If she goes on horseback, the baby is in front of her in the saddle. As a rule the children have a bright, healthy look, but the mortality among infants is very great, owing to lack of medical help and proper care. Small-pox and bowel troubles are responsible for most of the deaths.

Up to the age of seven the boys live in the harem, petted and spoiled by all, from the mother to the last slave. In the eighth year he enters the beroun, or men's quarters, though naturally he has the run of the whole house. At this age, among the higher classes, the boys are placed under the care of a tutor, who teaches them reading, writing, prayers, and deportment. The boys are taught to be polite and reserved in the presence of their elders, not to break into the conversation nor to ask questions. A small boy of good family will conduct himself with a formality and regard to etiquette that few grown persons in the West can imitate. Occasionally at the death of his father one may see an eight-year-old boy who is the head of the family. He will sit in the place of honour, receive guests, lead the conversation with dignity,

order coffee and the pipe—in a word, conduct himself as an old man. The noisy rollicking fun of a European child of this age is never permitted in Persia, and all abrupt and undignified motions are prohibited. If the boys are not taught at home by a private tutor, they are sent to a public school. At the age of fifteen or sixteen the boy is married, and if his mother is a widow she usually rules his harem.

The position of women among the nomadic tribes is a little different, as the conditions of their life make the seclusion of harems impossible to the degree that one finds it among settled people. While the boys take part in the life of the men, the girls from the age of seven or eight help in household work, the care of the younger children and in weaving carpets—the employment of all the nomads in Persia. Girls are a good investment among nomads, for on getting married the husband pays the parents a certain sum known as "sherie-bega," or "kalima." These girls are married very young, often at ten years or less.

Before our occupation of Transcaspia the Turkomans in their raids into Persia often carried off girls and women, whom they made slaves. The lot of these women was a sorry one. On the one hand her captor had the right of placing the girl in his harem without the ceremony of a marriage, and on the other hand she excited the jealousy of the legal wife or wives, who treated these rivals as simple slaves. In the presence of the husband the jealousy remained to a degree hidden, but during his frequent absences on long raids they gave full play to their hatred and jealousy. The poor Persian slaves were often chained, whipped, and fed only enough to keep life in them. The fate of the Persian men carried into captivity, on the contrary, changed for the better during the absence of the husband. At such times the Turkoman ladies

treated them with favour and frequently helped them to gain their freedom. I personally knew of two such instances, as related to me by the escaped captives themselves.

One would think that, handicapped as they are in every way, secluded in harems, and enveloped in veils, the Persian women could not take any part in the social or political life of the country. Facts prove the contrary, however. In 1848, for instance, after the death of Mehmed Shah, a woman ruled Persia for some time, and she did it with great tact, energy and dignity.

Another, Hurrie-ul-Eyen, was at the head of the disciples of Babism. A third, the wife of the famous Hadji Kevvam, Hadji Bebi Hanum, enjoyed a great popularity, and at the time of an insurrection in Shiras, in the middle of the last century, she, with her own hands, gave out the guns to the insurgents.

Furthermore, there have been times when women have governed some of the semi-independent provinces to be found in Persia. In 1880 the ruler of the province of Hergira, lying north of Azerbaijan, was a woman. I once had the honour of receiving her in my house. She seemed to be at that time between thirty-five and forty years of age. On taking leave of me she said, "If at any time you have need of Tuti Hanum [her name] send me word. I have not many horsemen, perhaps some three hundred or four hundred, but each one can make himself felt. In case of trouble you write me and it is for me to act." This woman's influence reached beyond her own people to the neighbouring semi-independent tribes.

Everyone living in Persia can give instances where women have been the means, by their tact or energy, in saving their husbands in troubled days even from death. There are times, too, when, men being powerless and unable to take a responsibility, the women have saved the

PERSIAN LADIES LISTENING TO MUSIC

day. From many such instances I shall cite but a few that have taken place in comparatively recent times.

In 1861 there was a famine in Persia. If such years bring suffering to well-administered European countries where quick means of communication exist, and the government and society make every effort to relieve suffering, what must a famine mean in Persia, where communication is slow and at some periods of the year closes, where those in authority buy up grain and sell it at their own prices, becoming rich at the expense of the people, where society and government do nothing to relieve the misery? In Europe it is impossible to realise how the prices can rise in Persia when the crops fail. Bread is sold at eight, ten and twelve times its normal price. In addition to this, bakers having but little flour sell their bread to their acquaintances or to people of position, and others cannot get it even for money. This fact was proved by the beggars refusing money and only pleading for "bread, bread." Along the streets lay the bodies of those who had died from starvation. At this time a mob of several thousand women driven to desperation in Teheran went out to meet the shah on his return from a shooting expedition. The women surrounded his majesty so closely that he could not escape from them, and he had to listen to the story of their wrongs and to promise them to cause an investigation to be made. The result was that the chief of police and several others paid for their avarice with their lives, and the price of bread that day dropped one-half!

In 1880 the inhabitants of Tabriz had a tax laid by the governor general upon all provisions brought into the markets. The result of this tax was a rise in the price of the most common necessaries of life. The deep-repressed discontent rose to murmurs, and finally to an outbreak of the women, who, meeting the governor in the

street, surrounded him. His escort decamped, leaving the unfortunate official to the mercy of the mob of angry women. He was obliged to pledge his word that the obnoxious tax would be removed, and he kept his promise. The governor general of Ispahan, too, was once unfortunate enough to give orders that caused discontent among the people. The women seized upon a day that he had gone out shooting and gathered at a place that he had to pass on his return home. When he arrived the women closed in upon him, throwing their babes on the ground under the feet of the horses of the governor and his suite. The procession halted, and the governor was obliged to pacify the women by yielding to their demands. Such instances are by no means rare in any part of Persia.

But what is the view of the Europeanised Persians on the woman question? Do their views change under the influence of European life and European education? Unfortunately the reply is definite and in the negative. From many years' experience in Persia, and close acquaintance with the people, I am persuaded that neither long years passed in Europe nor education received there can change the views held for one thousand three hundred years in the Islamic world in regard to woman. In conversation with casual acquaintances such Persians will always take the popular ground, criticising the uncivilised view of their countrymen, but they are not sincere. With an intimate European friend, or after the cup has been freely passed, they will show their real belief that the freedom of women in Europe is a great curse; that owing to it, women are frequently the "apple of discord," the cause of duels even between friends; that women invented fashions and made their husbands slaves to it also; and finally, that owing to this freedom there are in Europe more unhappy marriages than in Persia. But more con-

vincing than words are deeds. These "Europeanised" Persians, in returning to settle down in their native land, will keep their harems with a strictness seldom to be found in modern times by the most old-fashioned of the natives.

In summing up, nothing can better show the view Persians take of woman's equality in the home than the popular lines of the poet Saadi, which, roughly translated, run:

> "No happiness comes to the house of him
> Whose hen hath crowed like a cock."

CHAPTER XIX

PERSIAN DAYS OF MOURNING, FASTS AND FEASTS

Characteristics of Shiite Fêtes—Friday—The Sacred Month of Muharram and its First Ten Days—Historical Origin of these Celebrations—Religious Processions—Mystery Plays—Tekke Actors—Birthdays of Mohammed and Ali—Fasting during Ramadan—Anniversary of Ali's Death—Night of el-Kadr—First Month of Shawwal—Omar-Kushan—Kurban Bairam—The Persian New Year—Its Origin and Significance in the Life of Persians—Calls—Solar Year—The Calendar in the Persian's Life—Divisions of Summer and Winter into Periods—Divisions of the Twenty-four Hours.

PERSIAN fêtes may be divided, according to their historical origin, into three categories: first, such as are common to all the Moslem world, whether Sunnites or Shiites; second, days of mourning, observed only by Shiites, who form the majority of the population of Persia; and thirdly, the civil fête day of No-ruz, or New Year, which dates from pre-Islamic days. The religious celebrations of the Shiites are mostly of a sad character, being for the greater part the anniversaries of the death or martyrdom of their saints, or imams.

The Moslem day corresponding to the Christian Sunday or to the Jewish Sabbath is Friday—Djuma. "Djum" means a gathering, or congregation; hence Djuma, a day for gathering together for service. This is the only religious signification that Djuma has in Persia, and we do not find much difference in the outer life of the people on that day.

The first month of the solar year is Muharram, which

is considered by the Shiites to be sacred, especially its first ten days, and is throughout Persia a month of mourning. The first ten days are devoted to the commemoration of the tragic death of the grandson of Mohammed, Hussein, and that of his family. To one who is unacquainted with the historical significance of this event, the street scenes make a peculiar impression. All ordinary movement is suspended, shops closed, cafés empty, and all work stopped. Processions pass, among which are people torturing themselves in the most cruel manner, and on every side one hears the cries of "Hussein! Hassan!"

To understand a description of these celebrations it is necessary to glance back to the early days of the Islamic world. Ali, as is well known, actually became caliph only after Abu-Bekr, Omar, and Osman, although having been designated, according to the Shiites, by the Prophet as his immediate successor. During the party strifes that followed, Ali was slain in a mosque at Cufa and was succeeded by Yezid. Hassan, the son of Ali, who married a daughter of the Persian shah, lived in Medina with his brother Hussein. Here Hassan was poisoned by his own wife at the instigation of Yezid, whom she afterwards married. A sister also lived with Hussein as well as nephews, these being the only descendants of the Prophet.

Shortly after the murder of Ali the inhabitants of Cufa invited his surviving son, Hussein, to return to Cufa, where he was promised assistance in establishing his rights to the caliphate. While on his way to Cufa with his entire family, sister, nephews and servants—in all seventy-two souls—he was surrounded in the plain of Kerbela by a host of 4,000 sent by his rival, Yezid. The Arabian historians, Abul Feda, Tabarie, and others, give us descriptions of the unequal tragic battle fought between the descendants of the Prophet and the warriors of the caliph.

On the 9th Muharram in the 61st year of the hegira (680 A.D.) Yezid's army of 4,000 met Hussein's little band. The latter entrenched themselves as best they could on low mounds by the Euphrates, where they received the emissaries of the caliph. The proposals made were rejected by Hussein, who resolved to give his life in the unequal conflict. He passed the night in preparations for the fight and in prayer. Wearied, he threw himself down and fell into a light sleep towards morning, when the Prophet appeared to him and said, "Have patience a little longer: soon thou shalt be with us." On awaking he recounted the vision to his sister, Zeinab, who exclaimed, "O God, why hast thou permitted me to live to see this day? Our father, Ali, is killed; our brother Hassan poisoned, and must I survive Hussein?"

At daybreak the brave handful prepared for certain death. They put on their best clothes, cleaned their arms and arrayed themselves to receive battle. So great was still the power of the Prophet's grandson that thirty of the followers of Yezid went over to him, and among the remainder a decided wavering was evident. The leader of the cavalry, fearing that the disaffection would increase, at once ordered the charge. In spite of the great inequality of numbers, the small band bravely repulsed the charge and kept up the fight during the entire day. Pitiful are the accounts given by the mullahs to the weeping congregations that surround them the 10th Muharram, the anniversary of the day of the suffering endured by that heroic little band. Their being cut off from the river increased their miseries, and many brave men perished in trying to dash down the hill to get water for the little ones who were crying with thirst.

In the evening of the 10th the end came. One by one his followers fell, and Hussein, wounded, took his small son in his arms, when a well-directed blow spattered the

father with his son's blood, and soon after Hussein received his mortal wound.

It is the anniversary of these events that is commemorated during the first ten days of the month of Muharram, and for these martyrs the entire country is in mourning throughout the month. Those who can afford to do so dress entirely in black, or the men in sign of mourning leave the top buttons of their shirts unbuttoned, and women who have no black garments wear what they have wrong side out! No marriages are celebrated, nor dinners given nor formal calls made during this time, and music is not heard except such as accompanies the religious processions. Although the mourning is usually limited to the month of Muharram, some devout persons continue it for two weeks longer.

The first few days only small processions go through the streets chanting and beating their naked breasts to the refrain of "Hassan! Hussein!" On the eighth and ninth days the processions become larger and more elaborate, culminating on the tenth day. In these processions are to be seen strings of camels on whose backs are women representing those who were taken captive and small children seated on horses spattered with blood. These children are often the daughters of the highest families in the city. The body of Hussein, covered with a bloody cloth and accompanied by his led horse, usually follows. In the front of the procession are hundreds of men and boys, some beating their naked breasts with their hands, others, stripped to the waist, lashing their backs with chains in time to the music and chanting. The swish of the chains on the bruised and bloody backs, and sharp slaps on the breasts can be heard from a distance above the din of the drums. Others, also stripped to the waist, shuffle painfully along, having their backs, arms and breasts hung with padlocks, daggers, horseshoes, etc., that are fastened

into the flesh. I have seen men who carried as much as twenty to thirty pounds weight in this way, actually hanging from the quivering flesh!

The "bloody processions" march by themselves, as they go single file sideways, with a peculiar swaying, sidling step. They are dressed in white slips, and are bareheaded, the middle of the head being shaved. The left hand of each man is slipped into his neighbour's belt, and in the right hand is carried a sword with which, in time to the music, each cuts his forehead and head, the blood pouring down over the white slips. Streets through which the "bloody processions" pass become wet and slippery with blood. Friends walk behind them to ward off the blows and to pick up and carry off to the baths those who fall from loss of blood. Persians will tell you that none of these men ever die, but they do frequently succumb, and then their friends consider that their souls have at once attained Paradise. These deaths are generally kept quiet, as the population is taught to believe that the Prophet sends healing to all those who wound themselves in this way.

One often sees small children being coaxed by their parents to cut themselves. I remember once watching from our roof a man whom we knew had buried many children and now had but one dearly loved child, a boy of some two years of age. Hoping to please God and secure the life of this child the father carried him in his arms in that dreadful procession, feeding the baby with sweets to console him, and every little while guiding the tiny hand that grasped a dagger to cut his own baby forehead. When the same procession, after visiting the prescribed mosques, repassed our house hours later, we saw the man carrying his now unconscious child, white from loss of blood, lying apparently lifeless in the father's arms. The poor man was happy in the hope that the tor-

ture had been pleasing in God's sight and that this child might be suffered to grow up!

Each city, town and village has its processions, but they differ in the degree of fanaticism. In the large cities of Meshed and Tabriz people come from the Caucasus, where bloody processions are not permitted. In the same city many different processions form, and, singularly enough, if they meet each other neither procession will make way and a bloody fight ensues. The police therefore carefully arrange a program for the route that each procession is to take, and in such a way as to avoid meetings; their efforts, however, are seldom wholly successful, and nearly every year collisions occur, with fatal results.

The most fanatical and the most capable of enduring pain are the inhabitants of Azerbaijan, the northwestern province of Persia, as well as those who come over from the Caucasus. When in Meshed we had a coachman from the Caucasus who would each year ask permission to "go and cut his head," and he always did it so conscientiously that we had the pleasure of driving behind a bandaged coachman for weeks after.

The processions halt at the various mosques, where special rites are prescribed, and also at the gates of the governor or other high dignitaries. These have food and cooling drinks prepared in great quantities to give to the people. All through these days men may be seen as water carriers, or with large jugs of sherbet or iced water, which they offer to the people in the processions, who, parched with loss of blood or the constant shouting and singing, gladly drink. Men of high rank often act in this way as water carriers, in memory of the sufferings of that small band who over a thousand years ago were cut off from water on the little hill in the hot Mesopotamian desert. The processions often go to the governor's house and demand the release of certain prisoners.

This leads to many abuses, rich criminals having a better chance of interesting the processions than have the poor.

In Russia and India the processions are accompanied by the police to keep order. In Turkey the position of the Shiites is rather delicate, as this celebration is something of a manifestation against the Sunnites. Street processions are therefore impossible, but the Turks permit the Persians to hold their celebrations inside of some caravanserai, or in the courtyard of a Persian house.

Throughout the month of Muharram religious plays are given, called Taazie, from the Arabic word meaning grief. These are something resembling the mediæval mystery plays, and they have for subjects the historical events just described. Properly speaking, these representations should take place the first ten days or at the most during the month of Muharram only, but for want of sufficient actors they often run over into the month of Safar. In the Taazies held for the shah, princes, or persons of consequence, the plays continue day by day in historical sequence, but they are all varied by prologues that are in no way connected, either according to contemporaneous history or exactness of fact. For instance, the eighth representation of the Taazie opens with the appearance on the stage of Tamerlane (Timur) and his vizier, who decide to place themselves at the head of an army and to conquer the world. The scene next shifts to Damascus. Here the governor surrenders the keys to Timur, and during the interview Timur recognises the governor as being a descendant of Shamir, the slayer of Hussein. Timur reproaches the governor, proving that he reached his present position thanks to an awful crime that hung over the heads of his ancestors. Then Timur orders the daughter of the mayor of Damascus to be brought before him. The damsel appears in full dress, and is also reproached for the martyrdom and suffering

of Hussein and his family. After which Timur orders the city of Damascus to be sacked. Timur is so overpowered by the emotions raised by his own speech that at the advice of his vizier he decides to attend a Taazie. This he does by joining the audience as a spectator of what follows!

In the tenth representation of the Taazie is the story of Jacob and Joseph as given in the Koran. The parting of Jacob from his beloved son is represented in the first scene, the lowering of Joseph into a well, the selling to Egyptians, and finally the grief of Jacob at the supposed death of his son. The angel Gabriel here appears to Jacob, reproaching him for his weakness and telling him that there have been more unhappy fathers than he, in proof of which he cites the sufferings of Hussein and his family. The Taazie then takes up the story and continues.

In the seventh scene we see Hussein having an interview with the commander of the opposing forces. In this interview a European ambassador appears who attempts to persuade Yezid to accept the terms of peace dictated by Hussein. When Yezid definitely refuses all his intercessions, the foreign ambassador himself embraces Islamism.

These plays are generally held in some large courtyard, the windows of the house furnishing boxes, or boxes are raised along the wall. This temporary theatre is called a tekke. The tekke of the shah is a circular building with a canvas dome, capable of seating some two thousand spectators. The stage is in the centre of the arena and the women sit on the floor all about it. Around the walls are three rows of boxes, some of which are open, for men, and others are enclosed by latticework, for the court ladies, and also for Europeans who may be present but had better not be seen by the fanatical multitude. The

boxes are lined with carpets, and during the representations pipes, tea, coffee and sherbet are served. The walls from floor to ceiling present a sea of light, as every available space is covered with candles, hanging lamps, lanterns, reflectors, mirrors, etc., which are most original in their effect. Of course only a few tekkes are so luxurious. In most cities and small places the Taazies are held, according to the season of the year, in courtyards, under the open sky, or in tents, that during this month spring up like mushrooms in every town and hamlet. The Persians of all classes are generous in contributing all that is necessary to maintain the Taazies. The actors are formed in companies under a manager, who is at once owner and stage manager. The principal parts are those of the Imam Hussein and his children, the actors for these parts being carefully selected. Children who can act are well paid, some getting for the ten days from three hundred to five hundred dollars.

The same company plays in different parts of the city, representations thus going on from eight in the morning until midnight, and on the close of one Taazie the actors may be seen hurrying to another tekke.

Women's parts are taken by boys dressed in women's clothes. There is no decoration. In one corner of the stage Hussein may be seen singing, and at the other side is Yezid, although they are not supposed to see each other, being in fact represented as miles apart! Umbrellas are placed open on the stage as tents; the foreign ambassador comes on in clothes borrowed from some European, generally with a top hat, and his daughter has always worn hoops and green gloves in the tekkes where I have been. Horses, camels and sometimes entire caravans pass across the stage and the street processions join the spectators. Owing to the talent of the actors and the vivid representation of a subject so well known and so close to

the heart of all in the tekke, the scene is moving in the extreme. When Hussein takes his last farewell of his children and sister the sobs of the spectators drown the words of the actors. The thousands present sob as one person; the women seated on the ground sob, the sentinels standing at the entrance, gun in hand, sob, and even the actors themselves break down and weep, while we outsiders and "unbelievers" find ourselves deeply moved.

The actors who take the part of Yezid and Shamir, the murderer of Hussein, are not to be envied. In Ardabil the man who played the part of Yezid was, in the sixties, killed by the multitude, whose fanaticism had been raised to the highest pitch by his fine interpretation of the rôle. Even in modern times the unfortunate actors who take these parts try to disappear unnoticed.

The clergy and some strict Moslems disapprove of the Taazies, looking upon them as blasphemous, but these are isolated voices "crying in the wilderness." Aside from the Taazies, in every mosque the mullahs read from day to day the moving account of the suffering of the martyrs. In riding through the streets during Muharram it is a common sight to catch glimpses through open doors and windows of the interior of a mosque or school, or perhaps of a room engaged for the purpose. The mullah is seated on the floor in front of his little book rest, reading, or rather chanting, and swaying his body back and forth as he does so. The floor is covered with seated people, veiled women being in the majority, and all are shaken with sobs and loud weeping.

On the 12th of Rebi-ul-Ewel the entire Mussulman world celebrates the birthday of the Prophet by firing of cannon and by fireworks at night. The 13th of Redjeb the Shiites commemorate the birthday of Ali, but without any special pomp. In Teheran the shah holds a recep-

tion, selam, and the evening before a display of fireworks is all that marks the day.

The month of Ramadan changes, for the time being, the entire course of social and business life, and has a very injurious effect upon the economic condition of the populace. This fast observed throughout the "Mahi mubarek," or blessed month, was appointed by Mohammed himself, probably in imitation of Jewish and Christian fasts.

The teachings in regard to the fast are to be found most particularly in the 181st and 183d verses of the 2d Sura, and are as follows: "The month of Ramadan shall ye fast, in which the Koran was sent down from Heaven, direction unto men, and declarations of direction, and the distinction between good and evil. Therefore let him among you who shall be present in this month fast the same month, but he who shall be sick or on a journey shall fast the like number of other days." Further, in the 183d verse permission is given to "eat and drink until you can plainly distinguish a white thread from a black thread by the daybreak. Then keep the fast until night."

The observance of the fast in all its strictness, as is the duty of every true believer (the omission of which may land him straight in Gehenna), is exceedingly burdensome. For a whole month he may not eat, nor drink, nor smoke, nor "even swallow his spittle," from sunrise to sunset. This is particularly trying when Ramadan falls in the summer months, when during the long days of from fourteen to fifteen hours the poor people may not even wet their parched lips. The day labourer and poor classes suffer intensely, and yet it is just these classes that have to work for their daily bread in spite of hunger and, what is still worse, thirst, that are the most faithful in carrying out the commands. The rich sleep all day to

make up for the night of feasting. The poor, unable to do this, drag through the day, only half doing their tasks, so that work of every kind is almost at a standstill during this month. All official calls have to be done after the evening meal, and one has to therefore make up one's mind to getting very little done. The fast includes the abstinence from food, drink, and certain other necessaries. Conditions are laid down under which even the dust that enters the body through the mouth may annul the entire fast. Women are forbidden to plunge into water, smoking is likewise prohibited, and taking snuff or smelling of aromatic herbs or perfumery, as is also the bath, from sunrise to sunset.

According to the Shariat the following persons are exempt from fasting: boys under fourteen and girls under nine years of age, travellers, the sick, and women at certain periods—this last privilege is granted not in view of preserving health but as coming under one of the heads of the doctrine "clean and unclean." Pregnant women, or those suckling their babes, are not freed from this obligation except in cases where the health of the child plainly demands it. The effects of the fast on the little ones is often pitiful.

The rich sleep from the early morning cannon or until midday or later. In the afternoon they pretend to do a couple of hours' work, but they are irritable and weak, as we always find when forced to make an official call. From three to four they go to the mosque, and later, to forget their hunger and thirst, they usually take a ride, or wait impatiently the evening cannon announcing the sunset and end of a long day of fasting. This is the hour most eagerly longed for by all alike, rich and poor, old and young. Everyone looks longingly at the shadows or at their watches, that during this month at least are carefully regulated. The bazaars are mostly closed and the

streets are nearly empty. The few one meets are pale and weary-looking, and they pass carefully closing mouth and nose from dust. On every side one hears the monotonous chanting sound of the reading of the Koran. Every true Mohammedan should read the Koran through during this month, for which purpose it is divided into thirty equal parts, one for each day. More religious people read the Koran through in three days, so as to get it read ten times in the month.

It is interesting to look down from our flat roofs into the yards of our neighbours on a summer evening of Ramadan. A carpet is spread by the running stream, the supper is laid out on a tray, ice water and sherbets are close at hand, and the kalian, or water-pipe, is lighted. The host and his friends are seated with their stockinged feet tucked under them, while their shoes are placed neatly in pairs at the edge of the carpet. Each one is leaning forward, waiting breathlessly, and the instant the gun is fired the pipes are passed, one or two puffs, then a long drink, and with a sigh of bliss all fall to in silence.

The whole city now seems to awake from sleep. After the evening meal the streets are animated, bazaars open, café fill, and the sounds of music and revel are heard, everyone in his own way trying to make up for the privations he has endured. All night the life of the city continues. Some two hours before sunrise a gun is fired as the signal for preparing the last meal. This is served, a last pipe smoked and a last pinch of opium taken (the origin of the muezzin's cry of "Ab-u-teriak," water and opium), and with another cannon's boom the day of fast begins.

Our Mohammedan servants would get a nap between this cannon and the time when they had to begin their work, but all housekeepers learn to look leniently upon

a house half cared for during this month. The first week, they say, is the most painful, and we found it to be so, for our men would be hardly recognisable, growing pale, weak, and utterly indifferent to their work. Later they seemed to get into training and would pull themselves together and get on much better.

According to the Shariat, the breaking of the fast is punishable with stripes for the first offence, with a greater number of blows for the second, and death for the third. There are, however, means by which one can evade the fast without laying one's self open to punishment. But this privilege, a journey, is possible only for the rich. Travellers are freed from fasting if they go more than four farsaks, about fifteen miles, and if they do not stop anywhere for more than a certain time. Ramadan, therefore, is the favourite time for leisurely caravan journeys to visit relatives in a neighbouring city, or to go on a prolonged shooting expedition, or more frequently on a pilgrimage to some shrine.

The second means of evading the painful fast is illness. The would-be invalid finds an accommodating Mudjtaheid who gives him a "fetwa," or written certificate, and he is free.

Many Persians, too, keep the fast outwardly but eat in secret, only in strict secret, however, as they fear the consequences of its being known. In 1891 two men who were caught in the act of eating during Ramadan were nailed by the ears to the wall, in which position they stood for hours, while passers-by spat in their faces.

Even friends on meeting will complain and mutually condole with each other on the hardships of the fast, though each may have the best reason for knowing that his friend has not kept the fast any better than he himself has done.

The exact days which mark the beginning and end of

the fast are always occasions for public excitement. According to the Koran it is necessary in both cases to see the new moon. On the expected days the flat roofs are black with people studying the sky. It sometimes happens that in one city the moon is seen, whereas in another, owing to clouds, it may not be visible. Now the telegraph exists, in many places the news can be sent from city to city, but if off the telegraph line the people wait another day, as they will not believe the calendar. So often the inhabitants of one place begin or end the fast before those of another!

The 19th, 20th, and 21st of Ramadan are by the Shiites consecrated to the memory of the events connected with the death of Ali. On the 19th he was stabbed with a poisoned dagger while praying in a mosque, and two days later, the 21st, he died. During these three days everyone is in mourning, the men go about with unbuttoned shirts, bazaars are closed, and often one cannot get any provisions.

During this blessed month of Ramadan is the holy "night of power," el-kadr, celebrated throughout the Moslem world under the name of "Leilut-el-kadr." This is the night, according to Mohammed, when God revealed to him the Koran as a whole, and it is also the night when divine decrees for the ensuing year are fixed annually and given to the angels to execute. Commentators, however, are disagreed as to the date of the celebration. After much discussion it was decided that it must be on the 21st, 22d or 23d of Ramadan. To be sure of not overlooking the correct date the Shiites hold all three! The Sunnites, however, celebrate the 27th of Ramadan.

In Constantinople the sultan goes to the mosque of Santa Sophia, which is brilliantly illuminated that night, the ceremony being one of the most unique and impressive that foreigners are ever permitted to witness.

MUHARRAM "BLOODY PROCESSION"

The 98th chapter of the Koran, on which the celebration is based, is suggestive of the last mystic chapters, and as it consists of but a few verses I will quote it entire.

Verse 1. "Verily we sent down the Koran on the night of el-kadr.

Verse 2. "And what shall make thee understand how excellent the night of el-kadr is?"

Verse 3. "The night of el-kadr is better than a thousand months."

Verse 4. "Therein do the angels descend and the spirit Gabriel also, by the permission of their Lord, with his decrees concerning every matter."

Verse 5. "It is peace until the rising of the morn."

The first day of the following month, that of Shawwal, as the end of the fast, is also celebrated as a fête day by all Moslems. On this day the sovereigns of Mohammedan lands hold official receptions, the poor are fed and the graves of those who have died during the year are visited.

On the 9th of Rebi-ul-Ewel in all Shiite lands the anniversary of the murder of the Caliph Omar is observed as "Omar Kushan." In most cities on that day an effigy of Omar is made and put up in a public place, where it is exposed to the insults of the passers-by all day. Firing is heard from every part of the city. "They are killing Omar," you will be told. In the evening the effigy is beheaded and burned in the presence of a large crowd, to the great horror of any Sunnites living in the place, who, however, take good care to keep in the house that day. In 1893 the Turkish consul general in Tabriz (a Sunnite) had the imprudence to drive out on one of the anniversaries of Omar's death. As he passed through the streets a fanatical Shiite shot one of the carriage horses of the hated Sunnite.

The 10th of Zilhidji all Mohammedans, Sunnites and Shiites alike, celebrate the Kurban Bairam, or feast of

sacrifice, commemorating, as elsewhere described, the sacrifice by Abraham of his son Ishmael, and not Isaac, as told in the Bible. On that day there is not a house where sheep are not sacrificed. A few days before this fête, flocks of sheep are driven into every city. In Teheran the shah holds a salaam, or reception, with set ceremonials. A camel is sacrificed, and in the olden times the shah himself slaughtered the beast and then had the meat sent to his favourites.

When we were in Meshed, several weeks before the Kurban Bairam a camel was daily led through the streets draped in white and hung all over with little mirrors and bits of bright ribbons. A drum and fife preceded this camel, that was led by one of the town executioners dressed in red. This was the "shah's camel," sent to be sacrificed in the city of Meshed in his name. For several days the camel was led through the bazaars and streets to collect money, the sum going to the executioners.

On the morning of the Kurban Bairam the camel (in reality a broken-down one, not the original) was taken with music at the head of an immense procession outside the town, where it was most barbarously sacrificed. The crowd with knives in their hands rushed and pushed to get a chance of cutting off a bit of flesh, and the poor beast was literally hacked to pieces before the butcher could do his work.

The 18th of the same month is in Persia observed as the anniversary of the day when by the murder of the Caliph Osman in 35 Hegira, or 656 A.D., Ali's succession to the caliphate was secured. This day is therefore regarded by the Shiites as a day of reconciliation and friendship. Anyone wishing to form a life friendship goes on this day to a mullah and tells him of his intention, the mullah solemnly ratifying the friendship.

Aside from these days the anniversary of the death of every imam is held by the Persians to be a day of mourning, but this is in practice seldom observed.

The gayest of all the fête days in Persia is that of No-ruz, or the New Year, which is also celebrated by the Armenians as Nobasart, as well as by the Jews. This festival dates back, according to Persian traditions, to the time of the fourth mythical king, Jamshid, who lived before the Deluge and whose reign—according to the same source—lasted for seven hundred years. He established the solar year, founded Persepolis, and was the inventor of the plough and other useful implements.

To evade the accusation made by the Sunnites that in celebrating No-ruz they are observing a heathen festival, the Persians claim that they do so in commemoration of Ali's succession to the caliphate.

However that may be, the fact remains that No-ruz is the brightest and gayest of all their festivals. It is celebrated on the 23d of March, when the sun enters the sign of Aries at the vernal equinox. It is truly the most rational of all times dating the beginning of a new year. All nature is entering upon a new life. The trees are budding, the nightingale begins its song, and the blue iris—that with the crocus are the first wild flowers to come up fairly from under the snow—is called No-ruz-gul, new year's flower.

Strange to say, in the north of Persia the storks that summer there may be expected almost without fail on that day, at least the male bird. He always arrives a few days ahead of his mate and seems to do a little house cleaning and repairing on his own responsibility before his weary spouse of other years comes to join him. On arriving she often drops down into their old nest as if worn out with her long flight, and we have often watched the male bird bring her food until she felt strong enough

to forage for herself. Many years' observation of a family of storks that lived in a high plane tree in our back yard revealed most interesting habits of these wise birds, that are held as sacred in Persia and have no cause to fear man. As eagerly as spring was looked for, so eagerly did old and young watch for the coming of the storks, and the picture of their summer life rewarded us for their study. But this chapter is already too long, and we must return to our No-ruz.

For several weeks before the new year, preparations are begun. All kinds of sweets appear in the shops, cages with bulbuls are hung up, flowers and greens forced, house cleaning done, and, above all things, new clothes prepared. Not only does every member of the family have at least one new garment, but it is the time when, from the shah down, each one gives to the one lower than himself. The governor general awaits with impatience the arrival of the shah's "khalat," or robe of honour. This gift assures him that he has the shah's favour, that his offering has been accepted, and that unless something untoward happens he may regard the office as his for another year. The governor general in the same way sends khalats to the governors and others under him, and this continues down the social ladder, where each householder gives a new garment to his servants, and even they do the same with the little maid-of-all-work who helps their wives at home.

Dervishes at this time take advantage of the spirit of giving to pitch their tent in front of some great man's door, where they remain until they get their "puli-khalat," or money for a robe, their new year's present.

This habit of giving presents has a deeper significance than meets the eye. This is the absence in most cases of fixed wages. Most Persians feed their servants and "give them presents" in lieu of stated pay. A Persian

servant considers himself injured if he does not receive presents, and prefers a situation with little or no pay but with "anams" to one where the pay in the end will reach a higher total but where there are no "anams."

Presents in Persia demand return presents, according to rank and means—from more than the money value of the first present to a lamb or a bunch of flowers.

The first day of No-ruz is celebrated with great joy. Everywhere there is movement and life. All are dressed in new clothes, and most have a flower to offer the friend as they give the greeting, "Aydi-mobarak," may your feast be blessed. Men may be seen carrying on their heads huge wooden trays of sweets covered with rich cloths. We always received from our Persian friends trays of sweets varying in number according to the rank of the sender, and the servants who brought them received from us an "anam" amounting quite to the price of what their masters had sent.

The festivities are kept up for thirteen days, during which time calls are made. The highest officials are called on the first day, and you then regulate your list for the following days according to rank. In every house you are sure to find large, round metal trays on which barley, or pepper-grass, canary seed, etc., is sown on a thick wet felt. The sowing is so timed that by No-ruz day the green is one or two inches high, and these harbingers of spring are among the pleasantest memories of No-ruz, as the laurel and mistletoe are to us in connection with Christmas.

The last, or thirteenth day, is looked upon as an unlucky day, upon which some misfortune will happen to anyone staying at home, as, for instance, an earthquake, and all therefore endeavour to leave their houses. This gives an excuse for a national picnic, that is so dear to the heart of a Persian. No idea of "kaif" is so perfect

to his mind as the picture of carpets spread on a green under the shade of trees that grow by a running stream. The kalian, the samovar, a little fire where kabob and pilau are cooked fill him with bliss. From the elaborate hot picnic lunch down to the bread and cheese and fruit of the poor the Persians love to eat it in this way under the blue sky, and the passing stranger gets many a hospitable invitation to alight and "eat bread."

With No-ruz begins the Persian solar year, which is regarded only in astronomical calculations, etc. The names of these months are derived from the names of the angel who was, according to the ancient Persians, the patron of each month. Each month had its special privileges according to the functions of its guardian angel; as, for instance, "Esfendermuz," the angel of submission, to whom was given the task of watching over the earth and caring for benevolent women. The fifth day of his month was called "Merd-heran," i.e., marrying. On that one day husbands were obliged to submit themselves absolutely to the wishes, however fantastical, of their wives. Maidens, too, had the privilege on this day of choosing for a husband any one they wished from among the bachelors. Each month had some such distinguishing feature.

The solar year was termed "Djelal," from Djelal-ed-deen Malek Shah, the third of the Seldjuk dynasty. About 470 of the hegira this shah made a change in the form of the calendar used up to that date and established the solar year.

The nomads also observe the lunar months, but they name them differently. They simply begin from No-ruz and give each month its number, "birenji," "ekeinji," etc. This method of counting adopted by the nomads, or Turks, as the Persians call them because of their Tartar

origin, is therefore known in Persia as "the Turkish system."

It is interesting to note that the solar years are grouped into a cycle of twelve years, each year of the twelve having a distinct name, and at the end of the twelve years the rotation is recommenced. These names also are of Turkish derivation, as, "Sichan-eel" (mouse year); "Ad-eel" (ox year); "Pars-eel" (leopard); "Tuschan-eel" (hare); "Lui-eel" (crocodile); "Elan-eel" (serpent); "Unt-eel" (horse); "Kuie-eel" (sheep); "Bechin-eel" (ape); "Dakuk-eel" (hen); "Eet-eel" (dog); and "Tonguz-eel" (boar).

In all official documents, contracts, etc., the date is given according to the hegira and the name of the solar year is added. As, for instance, "given in the year 1277, the year of the ape," or, "1278, the year of the hen," etc.

In conclusion, it is necessary to touch upon the calendar that is so important in the Persian's life. This generally appears just before No-ruz and is called Takvim. It is drawn up by astronomers and astrologers, who continue to be held in respect by the shah and his ministers, to say nothing of the populace. The calendar begins with the 23d of March, according to the solar year, and parallel to it are carried on the lunar (Turkish) Tartar, and the new and old European styles. In a separate column opposite each day is the horoscope for that date, indicating the lucky and unlucky days: what days, for instance, are auspicious ones for starting on a journey; for the purchase of a horse; for the cutting of a new garment; for marrying; sending children to school; dispatching couriers, etc. Even the hour for these undertakings is specified.

Each Persian believes implicitly in these days, and will in no wise begin anything of importance without

consulting the calendar. Wednesdays are considered especially unlucky days, and above all the last Wednesday of the year.

Each day and every hour of the day is dedicated to a special planet. This is of the most ancient origin, and it is interesting to note that from whatever day the various peoples begin their week the order of the names of the planets remains the same.

The manner of thus naming the days may be traced through the ages down to European countries, especially to those of Latin origin. Monday is the day of the moon —Lunae dies, Lundi, Lunedi, Monday, Montag, etc. Tuesday, dedicated to Mars—Martes dies, Martedi, Mardi, etc. Wednesday (Mercury)—Mercurii dies, Mercoledi, Mercredi, etc. Thursday (Jupiter)—Jovis dies, Jovedi, Jeudi, etc. In the same way Friday is dedicated to Venus, Saturday to Saturn and Sunday to the sun.

The sun is considered the most auspicious of all the planets. Jupiter presides over deeds of benevolence, property owners and property; opposed to him is Saturn. The moon is of good omen as the representative of the sun, and is therefore the patroness of ambassadors, deputies, emissaries, etc. Opposed to her is Mars. Venus brings little happiness in marriages and love affairs; Mars is opposed to her also. Jupiter insures success in all matters concerning the Shariat, laws, learning and all enterprises for the bettering of social conditions. Jupiter's opposite is Saturn. Saturn brings great misfortune, though he gives success in building and agricultural operations, as well as victory over enemies. Mars brings little evil, but is propitious in wars against unbelievers, and for bloodletting, which latter is regularly practised by all classes in Persia. The moon is opposed to Mars. Mercury is mixed, having good and evil powers. His

influence is for good in commercial affairs, accounts and for sending children to school.

Another interesting division of the calendar which is popularly observed, is into periods of forty days, or "chilleh." Both winter and summer have two periods each of forty days. The first forty days of each season are known as the great forties, or chilleh-bu-zurk, as the greatest cold and greatest heat may then be expected. The second forties of each season are known as the small forties, or chilleh-kuchik, when the cold and heat are modified. The great forty of the winter season begins the 24th of December and lasts until the 2d of February, while the small forty begins with the 3d of February and also lasts forty days. The summer great and small forties begin respectively with June 23d and August 4th.

The hours of the day are also divided, according to our ideas, in a very inconvenient manner. The day begins at sunset, which is the form of reckoning used in all Moslem countries. According to this system Sunday evening after sunset is the beginning of Monday, and the hours are counted from that time. The Persian will say two or three hours after sunset. Twelve hours after sunset is called "desteh," and then the count begins again as so many hours after desteh. Then follow two or three hours "before sunset." This is a most complicated system, for the hour being indicated gives you no exact idea of the time until you look in the calendar for the hour of sunset at that season. The timepieces also have to be changed daily so as to be set at twelve as the sun sets. To be exact in this is impossible in the majority of cases, and therefore to be late at an appointment is not considered to be a shame by Persians.

CHAPTER XX

SHIITE PILGRIMAGES TO THEIR SACRED PLACES IN PERSIA

Reason of Meshed's being formerly Inaccessible to Europeans—History of Meshed—City of Tus—Sanabad—Meshed at the Present Time—Sacred Rights of Refuge, or "Bast"—Causes Giving Rise to this Privilege—The Shrine of Imam Riza as a "Bast"—Muteveli Bashi, Rezavi and Tulabi—Abuse of "Bast"—Ways of Entering the "Bast"—Conversion of Christians to Mohammedanism—Sani Kuhneh—The Tomb of the Imam—Mosque of Gauhar Shad—Sani Nouv—Libraries—Income and Expenses of the Shrine—Miracles—Stones as Pilgrims—Kum—Mosque of Fatima—Grave of the Shahs.

ASIDE from their sacred places in Turkey the Shiites have their shrines in Persia as well, to which they go in large numbers every year. Among such is one in Meshed, the administrative centre of Khorasan, where in the ninth century of our era Imam Riza, the eighth Shiite imam, was buried.

We lived for five years in Meshed, and during that time had occasion to become somewhat acquainted with the small world by itself, as formed by the large staff administrating the religious, educational and financial side to this great shrine, that possesses real estate designated as "wakuf," or wakuf property. Meshed, the capital of Khorasan, the northeast province of Persia, has only been open to Europeans since the Russian occupation of Transcaspia and the establishment of European consulates. Up to that time Meshed was only visited by occasional travellers, who met with many unpleasantnesses caused by the extreme fanaticism of the population, who

considered the mere presence of Christians as polluting the sacred city. The European powers had great difficulty in obtaining the consent of Persia to establish consulates in that place.

The signification of the word Meshed is literally witness bearer, or, to translate broadly, place of martyrdom. Though it is more than probable that Imam Riza died a natural death, the popular phantasy attributes to him the crown of martyrdom, to which legend the Persian historians have yielded; attributing his death to the son of Haroun-al-Rashid, the Caliph Mamoun, who lived at that time in his capital Merv, and who according to this story killed Imam Riza in the city of Tus. This place, once a large city, is now a heap of ruins on which is built a small hamlet, of interest to us only on account of its being the burial place of the immortal creator of the Persian epic, Firdusi.

Imam Riza was buried in the small town of Sanabad, fifteen miles from Tus, and gradually pilgrims began to be attracted to this shrine, their numbers yearly increasing. The Spanish ambassador, Rui Gouzalaz di Klavecho, sent to the court of Timur at Samarcand in the year 1404, found on the site of Sanabad a city and mosque visited by many pilgrims. Gauhar Shad, the wife of Timur's son, Shah Rukh, built over the tomb of the imam a magnificent mosque, which is still standing. During the sixteenth century the little hamlet of Sanabad grew into the large city of the present Meshed. The rulers of Persia, being Shiites, vied with each other in adorning the holy place and offering rich gifts to the shrine. How much they were influenced in doing this by a desire to attract pilgrims here rather than to sacred places in Turkey, it is difficult to say. I am, however, of the opinion that there was more of a religious than a political motive governing their deeds.

At the present time Meshed is a busy commercial centre, carrying on large trading operations, principally with Russia. Its fixed population is about fifty thousand, but the one hundred thousand pilgrims annually visiting Meshed play an enormous part in the life and trade of the city. They not only bring large sums of money to the "astaneh," or shrine, but to the city at large. Everyone regards the pilgrims as fair booty, beginning from the highest ecclesiastic in the astaneh down to the smallest shopkeeper. As in all other places of pilgrims, professions peculiar to their needs spring up, as grave-digger and stone-cutters for marking the monuments, made from stone brought from the mountains near the town. The bodies carried here for burial bring a considerable income to the astaneh, as the plots are sold at prices varying according to the means of the individual and the distance of the grave from the imam's tomb. The prices range from several hundred dollars down to five or even less.

Meshed, as most Persian cities, is surrounded by walls and towers protected on the outside by a moat across which in five places bridges lead to the city gates. Once inside one finds dirty streets filled with rubbish, decaying vegetables thrown out, an occasional body of some animal left to its fate—all this, with the great crowding during the pilgrim season and the extensive cemeteries to be found inside of the city proper, would seem to be enough to render the town very unhealthful. That this is not the case must be attributed to the remarkable climate, as Meshed has an altitude of over 3,000 feet, with cold winters and clear skies.

The chief street of the city passing through the holy place, called the "bast," is known as the Khiaband, or avenue, and is worthy of its name. It is exceedingly wide, with a broad stream carrying the city water supply flow-

ing through the middle, on both sides of which trees are planted. This avenue and the stream of water are filthy in the extreme, but the pictures that unfold themselves on every side seem to beg to be placed on canvas, so full are they of picturesque details that would delight an artist. It was with never-ceasing interest that I passed through the streets, so full of life and movement and local colouring.

To understand the peculiar conditions in the city it is necessary to acquaint the reader with the Persian recognition of the sacred rights of refuge, or "bast." In the Bible we read of the cities of refuge and the privileges pertaining to them. In defining the word bast we can take it as indicating a place in which a person who has committed crimes, even murder, may remain unmolested by the law or by his enemies. This ancient custom arose probably owing to the fact that in the despotic countries many were punished without trial and in a moment of anger, and therefore these basts have undoubtedly been the means of saving many innocent lives.

During the many years I spent in Persia my house often served as a place of refuge, and often I have been called upon to act as intercessor and to save those who had cast themselves under my protection. I shall relate one such instance. One morning while living in Meshed we were aroused by violent firing, apparently in our large garden. Hurriedly dressing, I went out, to find all the servants gathered at a respectful distance about a well-dressed man, who had, as most Persians, a dagger at his belt and a revolver in his hand. He was standing with his back to a wall; his face was pale, his eyes wild and he breathed heavily, looking like a wild animal at bay. I went up to him and demanded his dagger and revolver, which he immediately gave up. He was unable to speak, and I ordered him removed to a room where he could rest

and a cup of tea was given him. Later on from his story it appeared that he had been accused, quite unjustly as it was afterwards proved, of an intrigue against the life of the governor general, who had ordered him arrested and brought dead or alive to his presence. He had escaped over the flat roofs of the city, followed by the firing of the men sent to take him. Running and jumping from roof to roof, scaling ladders, dashing through courtyards and gardens and again on to roofs, closely followed by the now infuriated servants of the governor, he had at last reached the roof of our stables, from which, under a shower of shots, he had made his way into our garden. Here was bast, he was quite safe. The crowd held back, and though looking in at the open gates, not one of the governor general's men would enter and violate the bast. I at once sent to the governor general, and only after receiving his assurance that the case would be fairly tried and the life of the man who had sought my protection spared did he leave my house. To be just I must add that the Persian official kept his word; not only was the case justly tried, but on the innocence of the young man being proved he was given an appointment in the administration to recompense him for the false accusation.

But if the bast has its good side, there is a reverse to the medal, and it becomes an abuse in the hands of criminals, thieves and debtors, and when, as in Meshed, the bast is a small town in itself it becomes a nest of evildoers.

In former years, up to the fifties of the past century, basts were sown broadcast over Persia. Every little mausoleum, over the tomb of a more or less doubtful descendant of an imam (Imam Zadi), served as a bast. And such mausoleums cover all Persia. It was enough to discover somewhere human bones, or, as it occasionally happened, bones that the ignorant supposed were such,

while in reality being of some beast, that the people should consider them as the remains of some holy man, miracle-working powers attributed to them, and a mosque was built. Such a great number of refuges gave rise to abuse and the total impossibility of crime receiving its just punishment.

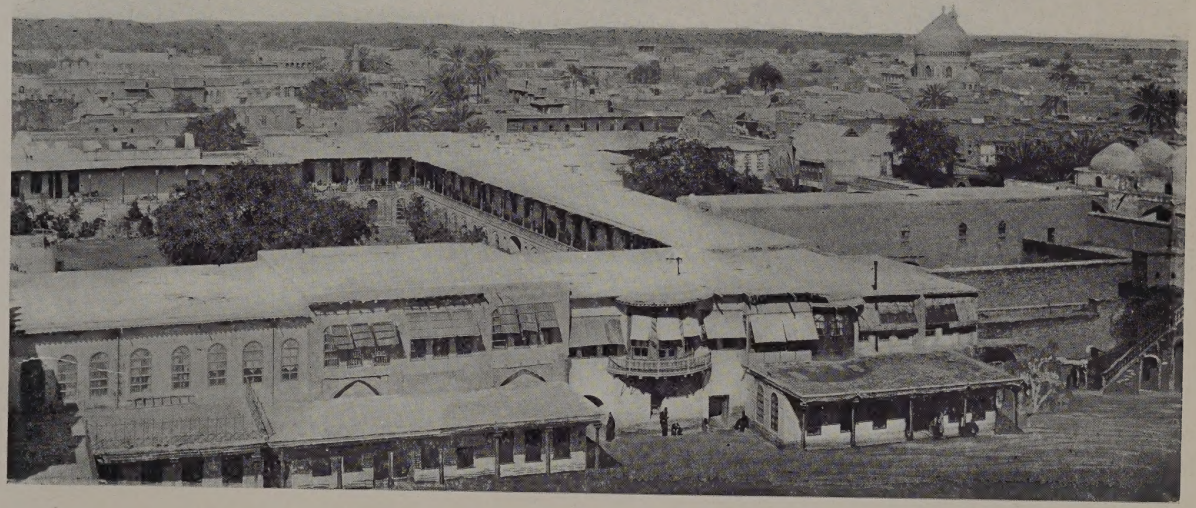
The minister of the predecessor of Nasr-ed-Deen Shah, Mohammed Shah, began to fight against this condition of things, and after great opposition succeeded in limiting the number of refuges. Still, down to the present time the following places in Persia have the right of affording bast: first, the chief mosques in Meshed, Kum and the mosque of Shah Abdul Azem near Teheran; second, the premises of the foreign ministers and consuls; third, certain institutions, as, for instance, telegraph stations and artillery barracks; fourth, stables. The last two are recognised as places of refuge owing to the popular belief that horses belonging to a man who has failed to respect the sacred right of bast will bring his owner misfortune. From this belief arise instances that we have experienced, when men escaping from the hands of justice have taken refuge under the shadow of one of our horses on the march or in camp.

In Meshed the bast is all of that part of the city surrounding the mosque that is erected over the tomb of Imam Riza. This is a huge pile of buildings, including within itself schools, a theological seminary that draws young men from all parts of Central Asia, quarters for pilgrims and for the large staff that administer the shrine and their servants, public baths, hospital, free dispensary, bazaars, caravanserais, etc., and the whole of this great area is considered bast and is under the absolute government of the guardian of the shrine, or mutaveli bashi, who jealously guards all the rights and privileges of the bast. In this he is upheld by the clergy,

mullahs, and theological students, or tulabs, and the many Rezavi descendants of the imam, or those who consider themselves as such. They are the most lawless and dissolute of the inhabitants of the city, parasites of the shrine at the expense of which they live. Taking advantage of their immunity from punishment, as the descendants of the imam, they allow themselves all sorts of license, which is generally forgiven them. With such strong backing the mutaveli bashi is a great power in the life of the city, and the bast becomes the refuge of criminals and evildoers, and of debtors who live year after year quietly in this small town within itself until, losing patience, the creditors generally come to some understanding with them, preferring to receive a small part of what is due than none at all.

I remember an amusing incident in this connection. It was during one of our trips up the Volga at the season of the Nijni Novgorod fair. A large Russian merchant happened to be on the steamer with us, and learning that we were from Persia came to me for advice. It seems that one of his clients, having taken goods to the tune of several thousand dollars, was living in Meshed and refused all payment. "I have an agent there," continued the merchant, "but he writes that he can do nothing, as my man lives in a place he calls bast. What do I care where he lives! Let him live in Paris, if he wishes, so long as he pays my debt." And great was the surprise and then dismay of my fellow traveller when I explained to him the full significance of the bast.

The entire part of the city which is regarded as bast is held to be sacred, and no one of another religion may enter there without paying dearly for his rashness. During my time in Meshed a European who attempted to enter was severely beaten by the excited crowd. If a stranger unwittingly passes a barrier he is sure to be soon



FLAT ROOFS FROM TOP OF MILITARY QUARTERS, BAGDAD

recognised, and is at first warned politely, but if he persists he is forcibly turned out. Christians can obtain entrance in two equally risky ways. First, in disguise, with the help of a trusty Mohammedan companion; but it is necessary to know one of the languages of the Shiites and the order of prayers and ablutions, to which whole volumes of Mohammedan theological works are devoted, and the casual and theoretical acquaintance of which is not sufficient. The second way, to express the desire of embracing the Moslem religion, is dangerous, as such would-be proselytes would be unable to escape the clutches of the mullahs, to whom is given the task of not only teaching him the tenets of the new religion, but to see that the candidate does not leave the confines of the bast for a certain period.

I knew a newpaper correspondent who in the interests of his paper entered the bast and announced the desire of embracing the Mohammedan religion. All went well until in the confirmation the point was reached of his being made a Moslem in fact—a ceremony that Mohammedans generally have performed in childhood. That night the frightened correspondent succeeded in avoiding the vigilance of his monitors and made his way to us. His escape was the more serious as the next day was the first of the month of Muharram, when all Shiites are electrified with fanaticism, and if the whereabouts of the unlucky correspondent were discovered, not only he but all the few Christians in Meshed would be in great danger. Immediate action was necessary. Another complication in the case was the fact of the city gates being locked at sunset. Fortunately I succeeded in getting the gates opened, horses hired, and before morning the correspondent, more dead than alive, was being swiftly driven on the road to Teheran, rather than to Askhabad, the nearest European city, and to which we knew he

would be suspected of fleeing. All this was carried out in perfect secrecy, and the next morning I listened with unmoved face to the most fantastic account of the mysterious disappearance of a European from the bast.

Cases of Christians espousing the Moslem religion are not as rare as one might suppose. All those who lived in Teheran about fifteen years ago will remember the case of a whole family of the European colony going over to Mohammedanism, an incident that caused much talk at the time. On the whole it is probably correct to say that more Christians turn Mohammedan than the reverse. Of course these conversions are generally due to influences having nothing in common with religious convictions. Some living in Persia take the step owing to a love affair that, if discovered, would be fatal to both parties; others owing to pecuniary inducements, but in such cases their hopes are cruelly disappointed, as the Persian always promises a great deal and fulfils nothing under such circumstances. A third cause leading foreigners to embrace Mohammedanism is to escape the punishment of a crime committed in their native land, and this conversion with its escape from justice, to their shame be it said, sanctioned by the European countries represented. The renegades generally have a sad fate. The Mohammedans naturally mistrust them, and they end their days strangers to both Christians and Mohammedans.

And so the bast is closed to Europeans. In spite of obstacles, however, a number of travellers have succeeded in getting inside. Among such were Fraser, in 1822, and O'Donovan, in 1880. But the interest does not justify the risks—especially now that we have photographs of the interior and full descriptions of the place and ceremonies. We can, therefore, not only picture to ourselves this holy of holies, but, what is still more interesting, the types of worshippers, Chinese, Indian, Turkoman and Circassian, who congregate there. It is said that the scene

in the mosque in which repose the remains of the imam is particularly effective when the lights of thousands of lamps and candles, and on Fridays electricity, fall upon the congregation formed of so many types and hues.

The bast is in the form of a parallelogram entered from the large avenue, or Khiaband. Through covered bazaars one turns into the second court, "Sani Kuhneh," the ancient court. This court is about 1,365 feet long and 630 feet wide, entirely paved with slabs covering the graves of persons rich enough to have paid for the privilege of being buried here. The court is surrounded by a two-storied building with porticos, while in the centre of the court is a fountain in the form of a kiosk with gilded dome, the water of which serves for the obligatory ablutions. The entire façade is adorned with enamelled bricks. In the centre of each wall is a most imposing arched gateway, surmounted with inscriptions from the Koran. Over the eastern portal is a legend stating that it was erected by Shah Abbas II., in 1059 of the hegira. The southern portal leads to the holy place where is found the tomb. An inscription over the gateway states that in 1085 H. Sultan Hussein built the portal, which was gilded by Nadir Shah with gold brought from a victorious expedition into India. Two gilded minarets are here. The shrine itself is in a large chamber paved with glass and spread with rich rugs. The walls are hung with precious armour, bracelets and gold ornaments of all kinds. Three doors lead into this shrine, one overlaid with gold, one with silver, and the third a wooden door, over which is hung a rug of pearls. The tomb is immediately under the dome, seventy-seven feet high, gilded on the outside and surrounded by three railings. The first is of steel and bears no inscription, but its door is covered with precious stones. Between the first and second gratings is a gilded screen made to protect the jewel-covered door of the second railing, which is also of steel,

and at its four corners are large emeralds set in gold plates. The third railing is again of steel, with a whole chapter of the Koran inscribed upon it. The space between the railings and the tomb proper is about one and a half feet wide and is paved with glass.

In the same mosque is the tomb of Haroun-al-Rashid and many Persian princes and high personages.

Adjoining is the library, containing over 3,500 volumes and 852 manuscripts, among which it is said are some of great value.

The second mosque in the bast is called Gauhar Shad, which also has a large court, surrounded by buildings of the same type as those of the other courts. Finally, there is a third court, called the Sani Nouv, or new court, upon which opens the school, "medrasseh," built by Mirza Jaffar, a wealthy Shiite from India and whose name it bears. Sixty mullahs also receive an allowance from sums bequeathed by him.

Within the precincts of the bast are to be found other schools, public baths and dining halls where the pilgrims are fed free of charge for three days. It is estimated that about six hundred of them are fed daily in this way. The staff of officers and servants number about two thousand souls. The yearly revenue of the shrine amounts to $100,000, and aside from this an enormous quantity of grain and other produce is received from the land owned by the shrine and which is scattered throughout the country. The income of the shrine, large as it is, would be much greater if it were not for various forms of abuse. The land is leased to various descendants of the imam, to sayids, or favourites of the guardian of the shrine, for far less than its real value. The sums received are spent on the maintenance of the enormous staff of the shrine. The mutaveli bashi has assistants called simply mutavelis, and after them a long string of diminishing rank, as in a court. Of the $20,000 annual revenue ten per cent.

goes to the mutaveli bashi, fifty per cent. to the remainder of the staff, lighting and repairs take ten per cent., for destitute pilgrims seven per cent., boarding the staff eight per cent., feeding the pilgrims seven per cent., and the balance is spent on various unforeseen expenses. The accounts are kept in the most primitive fashion, and it is not astonishing that a yearly deficit is the result. It would be difficult to find a place where there is greater corruption, intrigue, or more immorality.

Each year there are several miraculous cures reported, blind receive their sight, deaf hear or the dumb speak. While we were in Meshed one of those strange cases occurred, corroborated by "eye witnesses" and believed by all the town, though the imposture must have been known. A loaded camel fell in the street, breaking its leg. The owner immediately released the beast of its load and drove it painfully hobbling on three legs, intending to sell it to the nearest butcher for meat. They had to pass the entrance to the bast, and here the camel quickly turned and, escaping his master, entered the sacred precincts, and his faith was rewarded by the broken leg being immediately restored. The animal's life was respected, and when we left Meshed the pampered camel was still living a life of ease, fed with all sorts of delicacies and venerated by the pilgrims.

On the way from Askhabad to Meshed, if your driver is a Moslem, he is sure to tell you of stone pilgrims in the form of rocks weighing two hundred pounds or more, and will even point to such lying by the roadside and affirm that on his last trip those identical stones were several miles farther from Meshed than now. If asked whether he himself has seen them in actual motion, he will reply that the stones travel only by night, or that it is not permitted to everyone to see them move, or some such evasive answer. He will go on seriously to tell you that in the bast are many such stones that have elected to re-

main there; others after a short rest become uneasy, and the gate being open they begin their weary homeward journey, often hundreds of miles. And in fact a large collection of such stones is shown to the believers in the bast, and we ourselves often saw stones that had no business there in the middle of the busy Khiaband, and were told that they were pilgrims just arriving or returning to their mountain home. Once when I expressed some incredulity I was silenced by the words, "Is anything too great for God to accomplish, and cannot He make even the stones to bear witness to Him?"

There are several other mosques in Meshed, but they do not merit particular attention, most of them being built in the seventeenth century.

Aside from Meshed there are several other places in Persia that attract pilgrims, as, for instance, the city of Kum, some two hundred miles southwest of Teheran, where the sister of Imam Riza, Fatima, called Macum the virgin, is buried. Many of the kings of Persia are buried here: of the Safied dynasty, Shah Sefi I., Shah Abbas II. and Shah Solyman, while of the reigning house of Kajars the tomb of Fethei Ali Shah is found here. The grave of Fatima is in a light and very beautiful mosque surmounted by a gilded dome and flanked by four minarets. This mosque, being a royal burying place, is under the special protection of the shah. Here, as in Meshed, is a numerous staff connected with the shrine, that devours almost the entire revenue received from the offerings of the faithful.

CHAPTER XXI

LAW PROCEEDINGS IN PERSIA, RETALIATION, AND TEACHINGS CONCERNING THE "PRICE OF BLOOD" AND PUNISHMENTS

Unchangeableness of Persian Social Life—The Koran's Principle of an "Eye for an Eye"—Who Can, According to the Shariat, be Appointed as Judge—Shariat and Urf—Ministry of Justice—Civil Law Proceedings—Mohassels—Box of Justice—Criminal Laws According to the Koran—Punishments Laid Down by the Shariat for Theft, Murder, etc.—Punishments According to Urf for the Same Crimes—Home-made Punishments for Theft—Punishment for Spreading False Reports, for Robbery and Physical Injuries—Fatalism—Why a Dull Knife is Used in Beheading—Three Forms of Murder as Admitted by the Shariat—Price of Blood for Man, Woman, Slave, and Unbeliever—Price for Physical Injuries—Right of Retaliation and Blood Feuds—Right of Refuge—Instances of Blood Feuds—Blood Feuds among Nomads and in High Life—Chief Points of Difference in Moslem Laws and those Recognised by Europeans.

THE social life of the Persians is to-day what it was ages ago; it is as if the customs had congealed in their old forms, and if some changes have been made they are but superficial ones. The old spirit of the Koran, which governs to the smallest details the principles of life and is as unchangeable as the Koran itself, one letter of which, according to Moslem belief, never can be changed, still remains. This explains the fact that what amazed the traveller in Persia during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries still causes astonishment in our day. We are astonished by the absence of law, which is replaced by arbitrariness; we are astonished at the universal bribery, the cruel punishments, etc. How many times within the

last ten years have I seen headless bodies lying in the public squares of the large cities, or heads hanging over city gates, or in riding through the bazaars seen a man nailed by the ear, or the executioner leading a criminal whose cut-off hand lay in the hat in which he collected money, or leading a thief by a string passed through the nostrils! I remember one day when my wife came in great excitement to my study and told me of a murderer who was the next day to be split in two in the public square near us. She urged me to interfere and have the form of execution changed for a less brutal one. To save the man's life would be impossible, as he was a notorious criminal, having, it was said, the blood of thirteen persons on his hands. Although having no right, except of that of humanity, to interfere in local affairs, I went to the governor general, who was the brother of the then reigning shah. My interview with him was not without interest. For a long time he stoutly defended his position, arguing that it was not just to give the same punishment to a man who had committed but one murder as to a man who had killed many; that if the first deserved a comparatively painless death the second surely should fare worse. He also argued in favour of the good moral result on the lawless part of the population so terrible an execution would have. After listening to my arguments the only one that seemed to impress his highness was the bad effect I assured him such a deed would have on all European countries, whose newspapers would certainly get hold of this fact. This, more than any humane motive, finally decided him to cede to my prayer and to order the execution made by the cannon, which is considered the most quick and painless form.

But the poor criminal was certainly unlucky, or, as the people said, deserved to die hard, for my intercession did not turn out as well as we had hoped. According to custom the condemned man is placed on a bench high

enough to bring the middle of his body on a level with the mouth of a cannon. He is then firmly strapped in place facing the cannon, and with unbound eyes watches the awful preparations. Death is of course instantaneous and probably painless, the pieces flying in the air and dropping for miles about, as we ourselves had the ill-luck of seeing when out riding one day, a ghastly bit falling almost on our heads! Well, this poor man was probably badly fastened, for, as he saw the torch applied, he gave a desperate wrench and threw himself to one side, so that only a part of his arm was blown off. The executioner, probably too lazy to reload the cannon, threw him down and cut off his head!

In Urumiah I remember not many years ago several highwaymen were walled up and then buried alive in soft lime.

It would be a mistake if we attributed all of these cases to the personal cruelty of this or that governor. The cause lies deeper hidden in the fundamental principles of the Koran that find expression in the laws of an "eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth"; in the laws of retaliation as the means of cowering evildoers.

As the only written laws of the Persians are to be found in the Shariat, which are founded upon the Koran, as interpreted by the theological and legal commentators, judges can only therefore be persons who have made a specialty of theological studies. These are found in the class of the clergy known as "Mudjtaheids," whose decisions, according to Shiite belief, cannot be disputed. They are regarded as infallible on whom rests the inspiration of the imams. This, at least, was formerly the case, but in process of time the civil powers gradually assumed certain rights. So we find alongside of the law according to the Shariat the law as interpreted by the civil powers. This last is generally in the hands of individual persons or administrators, whose powers are prac-

tically unlimited. This latter form of legal administration, known as Urf, is not accepted by the Mudjtaheids, who admit of no interpretation of the law other than their own.

The law proceedings of the Urf are also based on the Koran, but with this difference, that, being unwritten, it is more elastic and capable of a more merciful interpretation of the merciless decrees of the Shariat—or the contrary, according to the circumstances. The laws of the Shariat being clear and precise admit of no change, as any deviation is held to be a sin. In this respect the Urf presents the possibility of softening punishments, or changing the form of its administration. On the other hand, the Urf is at times the cause of great abuse and cruelty. The need of fixed and just laws led to the formation in the latter half of the last century of a special portfolio, that of Minister of Justice, who could act as the highest appeal in deciding civil and criminal cases. But neither the minister nor his aids have the right of being judges, as they have not the authority of the Shariat for acting in this capacity, nor are they competent in cases of jurisprudence, not having received a theological training. So we return to the same problem, and we find attached as jurisconsuls to the ministry members of the clergy who interpret the laws as of old according to the Shariat. In this way the law in Persia is in a charmed circle out of which it cannot break.

In some cities the Ministry of Justice has its representatives, known as "divan begs." In other places all the power in criminal or civil cases alike is in the hands of the administrative power, whatever it may be, governor, chief of district, etc. Above them is the shah, but if we in Russia have the old saying, "Heaven is high and to the Tsar is far," how much truer is this in Persia, and how much the fate of the people depends upon the personality of the rulers!

To give some idea of the details of legal proceedings in Persia I shall take a case to be met with daily and shall follow it through its devious courses.

Let us take a Kerbelai Ali Mehmed who has had a controversy with Meshedi Hussein. Being certain of the legality of his cause, Kerbelai Ali Mehmed addresses himself to a Mudjtaheid, lays the case before him and presents his proofs and witnesses. It is by no means always the case that the accused be present. The Mudjtaheid gives his conclusion in a writ that admits the justice of Kerbelai Ali's case. The plaintiff, after many thanks and kissing the robe of the holy man, starts out for the house of the person possessing the necessary administrative power of carrying out the writ. Before, however, reaching this person our friend has to run the gauntlet of a whole bodyguard in the persons of servants, valets, mohassels, and secretaries, all of whom take an active interest in his case and are rewarded accordingly. The presence of the administrative official being at last reached, with a considerably lightened pocket Kerbelai presents the writ. The official respectfully receives the paper and first presses reverently to his forehead the seal of the Mudjtaheid. Then reading the document he orders that a mohassel be sent to the house of the accused. Mohassel signifies literally "achiever." It is a name of policemen who are in the service of any official having control of an administrative department. These men are sent to make arrests, or to search a house, or confiscate property, or collect taxes. Mohassels are generally selected from among the cleverest of the ferashis, such men as in Persia are called "ziring," smart, quick. Arriving at the house of the accused Meshedi Hussein, the mohassel without any hesitation lays hands on all that he finds.

If he sees a lamb in the garden, or a hen, he catches them and locks them in some convenient storeroom for future use. On entering a house, if a fine rug or brass uten-

sil meet his eye, they, too, follow the lamb and hen. In a word, Meshedi Hussein for the time being at least ceases to be the owner of his own property. Under the circumstances all that remains for him to do is to endeavour to "soften" the mohassel. He begins by professions of love and fidelity to the mohassel in particular and to the master and chief of the latter. He uses flattering titles, as "excellency" and "most high excellency." But the mohassel remains cold. Then Meshedi Hussein begins to enlarge upon the baseness of Kerbelai Ali and upon his own innate honesty and nobility of character. From this subject he passes on to that of the hard times and his own poverty; but this also leaves the mohassel untouched.

Finally, Meshedi Hussein comes to the point and offers a present to the mohassel, according to the price of the case in hand, the present varying from a sheep to a horse or a sum of money. The hitherto firm principles of the mohassel show evident signs of wavering, but he "saves his face" by hinting that a "peshkesh," present, might be acceptable to his patron. Then begins a conversation that ends in fitting presents to those who can influence his cause. The mohassel leaves, and often this is the end of the case. Occasionally, however, the defendant brings a counter-accusation showing the injustice of the accusation brought against him. Having paid to open the doors he, too, gets a Mudjtaheid to give him a writ, and the whole process is reversed. This is in the end the worst turn for both parties. The mohassel is sent to both places, both parties are dissatisfied, and finally the case, passing through many expensive stages, goes to the Ministry of Justice. Here begins an endless dragging through with peshkeshes, that ruin both sides. If one or the other of the parties has the luck to interest a very influential person on his side there is hope of the process being brought to an end, though not necessarily the rightful end. In

RUSSIAN CONSULATE MESHED

every case if the plaintiff be a person of weight the process is sure to be decided reasonably soon and in his favour.

In order to in some degree neutralise such evils, in the latter part of the last century a "box of justice," Sunduki adalate, was established. These boxes, resembling our letter boxes, were set up in every town with a notice calling upon all who had a complaint to make of unjust punishment or injustice of any kind to drop in this box his written complaint. These complaints were to be sent to Teheran for consideration. The boxes did not, however, achieve the hoped for results. In many places men were placed near the boxes, nominally for their protection, but in reality to arrest anyone attempting to post a petition. Or such complaints that did reach Teheran were either decided in the old way, or, if they met with impartial treatment, the judgment when sent back was evaded in some way or other. And so this reform dropped out of use of itself, swallowed by the old routine.

All criminal cases, except such as are against the faith or public peace and order, are prosecuted only if the victim or his friends bring plaint. The criminal laws given in the Koran are clear and short and always founded on the old Hebraic principle of an "eye for an eye."

The punishment for theft is given in the 42d verse of the 5th Sura thus: "If a man or woman steal, cut off their hands, in retribution for that which they have committed: this is an exemplary punishment appointed by God: and God is mighty and wise."

The 94th verse of the 4th Sura gives the punishment for accidental murder. "It is not lawful for a believer to kill a believer unless it happens by mistake: and whoso killeth a believer by mistake, the penalty shall be the freeing of a believer from slavery, and a fine to be paid

to the family of the deceased, unless they remit it as alms: and if the slain person be of a people at enmity with you, and be a true believer, the penalty shall be the freeing of a believer: but, if he be of a people in confederacy with you, a fine to be paid to his family, and the freeing of a believer. And he who findeth not wherewith to do this, shall fast two months consecutively, as a penance enjoined from God: and God is knowing and wise."

The principle of the price of blood is included in the 173d verse of the 2d Sura: "O true believers, the law of retaliation is ordained you for the slain: the free shall die for the free, the servant for the servant, and a woman for a woman: but he whom his brother shall forgive may be prosecuted, and be obliged to make satisfaction according to what is just, and a fine shall be set on him with humanity. This is indulgence from your Lord, and mercy. And he who shall transgress after this by killing the murderer shall suffer a grievous punishment."

On this ground the law permits of a murderer escaping punishment if the relatives accept money recompense. From the above quotation also the inference is drawn by theologians that as a man is punished for the murder of a man, a slave for a slave, etc., a true believer cannot be punished for the murder of a Christian.

The punishment for crimes against public peace and order we find mentioned in the 37th verse of the 5th Sura: "But the recompense of those who fight against God and His Apostle and study to act corruptly in the earth, shall be, that they shall be slain or crucified, or have their hands and their feet cut off on the opposite sides, or be banished the land. This shall be their disgrace in this world: and in the next world they shall suffer a grievous punishment, except those who shall repent before ye prevail upon them, for know that God is inclined to forgive and be merciful." The verses I have quoted are the basis of the

teachings of the Shariat and present the regulating note of the Persian codex of to-day.

Theft. According to the Shariat every theft, so long as it be not accompanied by robbery, is punishable only on the complaint of the victim. Otherwise a thief, though caught in the act, goes unpunished. Again, theft is distinguished as simple or as burglary. The former is never punishable by the cutting off of a hand. The hand is cut off only in cases where burglary represents a money loss of one-fourth of a drachm of gold. The Shariat clearly defines what forms of theft come under the head of burglary, even when there is nothing like burglary or housebreaking proper. For instance, a pickpocket removing a purse from the pocket of an overcoat is punished as for simple theft; but if he extracted it from the pocket of an inner garment, it is regarded as burglary. Equally, if a theft is committed in a house or room when the owners are awake it is regarded as burglary, whereas if committed while the owners sleep the crime is punishable as a simple theft.

Cattle stealing from the pasture, or fruit from trees, are held as simple thefts. In case several commit a burglary together the one who actually committed the deed is alone punished, or the one who instigated a minor to commit a burglary. Stealing food in famine years is punishable only as a simple theft, even though burglary were clearly proved. To condemn a Moslem for burglary the testimony of two reliable men is needed, or of one man and two women. The testimony of only women, however numerous, is not admitted.

The first commission of a burglary is by the Shariat punished by the amputation of the four fingers of the right hand, leaving only the thumb. We thus see that the Shariat deals very strictly with stealing. But as a process may be begun only at the instance of the one whose property has been stolen, the thief generally succeeds in com-

ing to terms by the payment of a certain sum of money or by returning what he has taken, and the case does not go to court.

If the case once gets into the hands of the Mudjtaheid, who pronounces sentence, the criminal cannot escape punishment even though the plaintiff be ready to withdraw his accusation. If, on the other hand, the plaintiff had under the same circumstances addressed himself to the civil law, the thief might have been condemned as in the former case according to the Shariat, or simply to the bastinado.

When a man accuses another of stealing, the former is made to swear that his accusation is just; if he refuses, the oath is then administered to the accused. Persians seldom refuse to swear to anything, consoling themselves with the popular belief that a false oath is not perjury if during the process of taking it one thinks of something else to which one could truthfuly swear. If a man of position suspects someone of stealing, confession is often forced by resorting to torture.

Small thefts are sometimes punished by passing a cord through the nostrils of the prisoner, and the executioner thus leads him through the streets and bazaars all day, and in the evening conducts him outside of the city gates, which he is forbidden to enter again.

Daring burglaries are very seldom heard of in Persia; minor thefts of charcoal or provisions from a storehouse seem to satisfy the thieves. There are a number of curious customs in vogue in making these house thieves give up their spoils. When a servant is suspected the master gathers all his household and after delivering a lecture on the dire punishment that will follow detection and safety that will be gained if the goods are returned, he proceeds to pour a basket of earth on to the floor of an empty room. Each servant is told to secretly do the same. If the articles be actually taken by one of the

household they are certain to be found in this pile of earth.

Or another and more dreaded means is resorted to. A mullah is called in, who assembles all the household, whom he makes sit in a circle on the floor. In the centre he places a bowl of water and by it a boy, who is told to look intently into it. The mullah begins to chant certain incantations calling on Solomon, the patron of all spirits. These are supposed to be kept by Solomon under lock and key and are only let out by him when he is invoked by certain words. The spirits are expected to come up through the bowl of water and to identify the thief. Such a terrible determination is, however, never reached, as the thief, frightened nearly to death by the mere thought of such a possibility, generally manages at the last moment to drop the stolen articles where they are found. In both cases, once the property is restored, the matter is forgotten and no attempt is made to identify the thief.

On the whole burglary and even petty thefts are exceedingly rare in Persia, excepting in famine years or during the change of governors or at some moment of political disturbance. And one must bear in mind that with the exception of Teheran there is not one city with anything resembling an organised police service, nor are any measures taken for the preservation of public safety, other than severe punishment meted out to any criminal caught. The safety of the cities, therefore, depends upon the reputation for severity of the governor.

Although, as we have seen, the law as administered by Urf softens those of the Shariat, still in extraordinary cases the former, too, are carried out with all the severity of the latter. Such are repeated offences, disorders that threaten public safety, false rumours circulated in view of increasing discontent, etc. For these cases the law is interpreted in all its severity, tongues that circulated

the reports are cut out, and ears that hear them are cut off, etc.

The Urf avoids the penalty of amputating a hand when the accused is a woman, but it admits of a punishment even more cruel. The hand is placed on the sill of a window, the heavy sash of which is suddenly let fall, often crushing the bones. If a woman is condemned to stripes she is put in a bag and beaten. This latter punishment is only administered by the law according to the Urf.

The Shariat recommends the executioners to hold the amputated part in boiling oil, which is invariably done.

Theft accompanied by murder is judged by the civil authorities according to the Urf. The punishment according to the Shariat in such cases is exceedingly severe, including amputation of extremities, beheading and crucifixion. In cases of relapse, or fresh offence, the successive punishments are given, first amputation, then crucifixion for the second offence. The latter punishment has, however, since the eighteenth century, been abolished in favour of walling up the prisoner in lime. During the Kurdish invasion of Urumiah of 1880 instances of crucifixion were, however, seen. Such mediæval punishments are meted out to highway robbers, armed insurgents, etc. When Turkomans were caught in raiding on Persian territory and carrying off women, which was of frequent occurrence before our occupation of Transcaspia, they were fired from cannons, hacked in pieces, or crucified. The brave sons of the steppes met their death calmly, expressing loudly up to the last moment their hatred of their torturers and their scorn of the death awaiting them.

It must not be supposed, however, that these extreme punishments are carried out in all cases justifying them by the law. Abuse is the more prevalent as the legal and administrative functions are to be found in one and the

same person, the governor. Bribery and influence each has its turn, and many are the crimes that remain unpunished and the criminals who succeed in "escaping."

There are few prisons, as we understand them, in Persia. Each governor, noble, or individual of influence has a room or rooms or stables in which he confines his prisoners. To make escape more difficult these are generally chained in a long string to each other. Thick rings are soldered about the neck and a heavy chain connects each man to his companion, or they are chained to the wall. There are no rations regularly given out, but the prisoners are fed by their friends, or they only get whatever the one by whose order they are arrested chooses to send them. Sometimes men are kept for a year or more in these filthy places, but long imprisonments are usually avoided. If the prisoner has means it is comparatively easy to escape.

When in Meshed we often passed the square in front of the residence of the governor general, where there was a large basin of water. Summer afternoons we frequently saw a string of chained prisoners led out to bathe in that public place. They had rags wound around the rings to keep them from chafing the neck, and as they walked each painfully held up the chain to ease the great weight about the neck. As only a few could get into the basin at a time, and there were perhaps a dozen or more chained together, those not in the water had to kneel or almost lie down on the edge of the basin to give enough length of chain for their companion to get down into the water. The poor wretches, with a sickly prison pallor, some of them old and others mere boys, always begged pitifully as we passed for money to buy bread. We had little satisfaction in giving, however, for we were never sure that they were allowed to keep the money. The firmness with

which many meet a painful death is largely explained by their deep belief in fate—kismet. All Moslems believe that we cannot avoid our fate, and they therefore stoically accept whatever comes. "The fate of every man have we bound about his neck," we read in the 17th Sura of the Koran. Among other grounds for this belief we find in the 3d Sura and 139th verse of the Koran the following words: "No soul can die except by the permission of God, according to what is written in the book containing the determination of things." Also in the 14th Sura the 4th verse, "for God causeth to err whom he pleaseth, and directeth whom he pleaseth, and He is the Mighty and Wise."

On the eve of execution the condemned are well fed with "pilaw" and when led to the spot they often ask permission to smoke a pipe, and after repeating what to them corresponds to our creed turn to the executioner, saying, "Bismillah"—in God's name. In passing I must mention a popular superstition to the effect that the knife used in beheading will find itself victims until it becomes dull. Hence dull knives are always used, hoping thereby to lessen the number of executions!

Murder. The Shariat recognises three degrees: premeditated, unpremeditated, and quasi-premeditated, or "katli-ehaseh." The definition of the first two corresponds to those given by European laws. Under the head of quasi-premeditated are included cases where a man is killed by some act which was not, however, committed with the intention of killing. For instance, if in condemning a man to a punishment that others had suffered without fatal consequences the man should die while undergoing said punishment, or in consequence of it, the one ordering the punishment could be condemned for "quasi-premeditated murder."

Premeditated murder may be direct, by a weapon, poisoning, strangling, and so forth, or indirect, when death

was brought about by a conscious plan of action, as in digging a well in a spot where the victim was expected to pass, and the fall caused death.

All three forms of murder, if they are not accompanied by robbery or theft, are punishable only at the complaint of the family or heirs of the person killed. These may demand the punishment of the murderer either according to the law of retaliation or by payment of blood money.

If by the law of retaliation, it is done literally on the principle of an "eye for an eye," but always must be subject to three conditions: first, the murdered man must belong to the same religion as the murderer; second, both must belong to the same social class, i.e., free or bondmen; third, if the murdered man is not the son of the murderer.

From this it follows that by killing a man of another religion a Moslem can by no means, according to the Shariat, suffer the death penalty any more than a free man can be so punished for killing a slave. It is natural, therefore, that the masses in Persia regard the killing of an unbeliever to be a light matter. The higher authorities are supposed to consider it differently, but my experience of many years of criminal cases in Persia is that all local authorities, in the shape of governors, etc., do regard it lightly and always try to avoid punishing a Moslem for the death of a non-Moslem. It is always easy for them to invent extenuating circumstances for the murder. According to the Shariat the murder of an unbeliever is justifiable if by the testimony of two Mohammedan witnesses he is proved to have insulted the true faith. Such witnesses are easy to obtain, for according to the popular belief it is no sin to bear false witness against unbelievers. To obtain justice for the murder of a non-Moslem in Persia is therefore always a very difficult matter.

In case of physical injuries the Shariat permits the

laws of retaliation, subject to the same conditions as for murder. In judging these cases special attention is given to the results of the wounds. If, for instance, a finger is cut off and inflammation that follows causes the loss of the whole hand, the law permits the sufferer to demand the entire hand of the one who wounded him.

As the law of retaliation, based on an "eye for an eye," could be carried to extremes, it has been found expedient in practice to replace it by that of the "price of blood," which is resorted to with the consent of the plaintiff, or, in murder, that of the relatives or heirs of the man killed. In the teachings concerning the "price of blood" we find the principle of retaliation is followed, and the price demanded is nearly as possible according to the amount of injury received as defined by the Shariat. For instance, the price of blood for the murder of a woman is half that demanded for killing a man. On this principle, if the relatives of a woman do not consent to receiving the price of her blood, but insist on the execution of the murderer, they must pay to the murderer's heirs half the sum of the price of a man's blood. Otherwise the crime of murdering a woman would have been punished equally with that of the murder of a man!

A case illustrating this principle took place in Tabriz some thirty years ago. During the absence of a Persian official from his home his steward courted the master's wife. The woman, refusing his advances, threatened the steward that she would complain to her husband on the latter's return. The steward then killed his master's wife. When the husband returned he was able to prove the guilt of his servant, whose execution he demanded. This, being the extreme penalty for the murder of a man, could not be carried out in strict observation of the law of retaliation. The husband therefore paid to the heirs of his steward half the money price of a man's blood and

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then the civil powers condemned the steward to death, which sentence was carried out. From this principle it follows that a man who has killed two women can be condemned to death, as in this case equality is not infringed.

If the murder of a woman be committed by several men, the friends can demand the death of but one of the murderers, and always by paying the difference in the price of blood, and the amount must be paid before the death sentence can be carried out.

On the same ground, if two women murder a man the death of both can be demanded; or if the relatives consent to blood money, each woman is to pay half of the price of a man's blood.

The same principle is carried out regarding injuries. The sufferer may instead of demanding satisfaction according to the law of retaliation consent to the price of blood, under conditions similar to those laid down for murder. In the latter case the part of the body paid for is considered as the property of the one who has paid the money. If, for example, A cuts off a part of the ear of B and pays the sum of money demanded. In the meantime B has had the bit of ear sewed on and the wound has healed. In this case A has a right to demand that the money paid be returned to him or that the bit of ear be removed!

The sum demanded as the price of blood is decided according to the category of murder under which the case is judged, that is, premeditated, unpremeditated, or quasi-premeditated.

The price of blood for the premeditated murder of a free Moslem is given by the Shariat as 100 camels of not less than five years of age each; or 200 cows; or 100 suits of clothes made of the Yemen stuff; or 1,000 dinars in money, equal to about $1,500.

For a quasi-premeditated murder the price is a little less: 33 she-camels of three years of age and 34 of five years, or $1,050 in money, and the payment is allowed to be made during a period of two years.

For unpremeditated murder the price is 20 yearling she-camels, 20 she-camels two years old, 30 she-camels three years old, and 30 camels two years old, or in money about $600. The peculiarity in this case is that the price of blood for unpremeditated murder *is not paid by the person whose act caused the murder* but by *the latter's male relatives or his future heirs.* The Shariat does not consider itself justified in laying a penalty on a man whom it does not hold guilty, while admitting the right of the relatives of the dead man to demand damages.

In all the above mentioned cases the price of a woman's blood remains half that of a man. The price of the blood of a Jew, Christian, or Gaber is according to some legal authorities fixed as one-thirteenth of the price of a free Moslem, according to others, one-eighth.

The price of the blood of a slave is not clearly defined, but must in no case more than equal that of a free man of the same religion.

The money paid for the price of blood is to be divided among the heirs according to the usual laws of inheritance. In cases where the murder was premeditated, the female heirs get their share of the money, but when the murder was unpremeditated, women do not share in the payment of the blood of the man killed by their relative.

The price of blood in case of physical injuries is also very strictly laid down in the Shariat, and on the same principle, but without going into detail, the following is the general price.

For depriving a man of both eyes, nose, ears, lips, teeth, tongue, extremities, breaking the jaw and backbone, the accused is sentenced to suffer the same according to

the law of retaliation or to the price of blood as for murder.

For depriving a man of one eye, ear, lips and beard, half the price of a man's blood.

For the loss of one finger or toe, one-tenth of the price of blood may be demanded.

For the loss of parts of the extremities, the price differs according to the part lost, as the loss of half a finger is fixed as worth one-twentieth of the entire price of blood. Breaking a part of one of the extremities, one-fifth the price. Wounds, according to severity, from one-half to one-tenth of the price of the entire member. A blow in the face not followed by blood, one dinar and a half.

There are also detailed laws for damages caused by carelessness. For example, a horseman is responsible while on his horse's back for any injury the horse may do with his head or fore legs. He is not, however, responsible for injuries the horse's hind legs may cause, unless at that moment he is walking and leading his horse. The owner of a wall that falls down and crushes a man is responsible only in the case of the wall not being built on his own land.

In actual life we find the price of blood less than that fixed by the Koran and subject to the consent of the parties interested; while the letter of the Koran is fulfilled by the following means: A kills B. According to the Koran, A is obliged to pay the sum of $1,500, whereas his entire property consists of a pair of oxen, a few sheep, a hovel and miserable household furniture. If a mutual agreement be made an assessor is called in, who values his property at $1,500, though it is clearly worth much less, and in this way the letter of the law is fulfilled. Another factor in bringing about peaceful conclusions is the sacred right of refuge, which has been treated in detail in another chapter. The criminal, sure of safety, re-

mains if need be a year or more while negotiations are being carried out, and when they are terminated and the price paid the murderer can leave his refuge in freedom.

If a criminal escapes into refuge leaving property, it is at once arrested or simply seized by the heirs of the murdered man. If others were implicated in the murder, their goods also are seized. This leads to the result that a murder sometimes causes a village to be almost deserted. Once in the eighties I was in the small village of Arvanie-keif, near Teheran, consisting of some five hundred houses. On approaching, it seemed as if a pestilence had swept through it. There were not over fifteen or twenty male villagers left, and these were old or infirm. The houses were empty, doors open and streets lifeless. Inquiries showed that a month before my arrival, two of the villagers were killed in a fight. All those in any way directly concerned in the affair fled to refuge. The relatives of those killed demanded the arrest of the property of the murderers. The latter, knowing of the complaint, had fled with such property as they could carry with them. In this way a village of some five hundred houses was almost deserted.

But there are other instances. A man remains in refuge a year, perhaps two or more, without the relatives of his victim consenting to a settlement. He then seizes a convenient moment and escapes, going to some distant city, perhaps Meshed, a large portion of which is regarded as "bast," refuge. But he can never consider himself as safe, and often falls at the hands of a revengeful relative of his victim twenty or more years after the crime was committed.

Brugsch in his "Reise nach Persien" gives an instance of such revenge which was told him by an eye witness.

A Persian of a small village near Teheran killed a man belonging to the same village. Fearing punishment, the murderer managed to escape, and under an assumed name

lived in various parts of Persia. Finally he came to Shiraz, where he got employment in the service of the governor, Prince Tohmansn Mirza. Thirty years had passed from the time of the murder and he considered himself as quite safe. Once he was sent by the prince with a drove of horses to Bendar Bushire. On the way he camped one night in the small hamlet of Kesht. Fearing for the safety of the horses confided to him, he took advantage of the presence of a company of two "tufangchis" (armed guards) who happened to be also camping there and asked them to help him watch the horses. To keep himself awake, one of the guards sang as he sat by the campfire, and the servant of the prince, recognising the song as one of those of his far-off native village, had the imprudence to ask the singer if he was not from such a village, naming his birthplace. On receiving an affirmative reply, questions followed. One of the other men, hearing the conversation, asked how long the prince's man had been away from home. "For many years, fully thirty," he replied. The questioner happened to be a son of the man murdered by the prince's servant! Other carefully put questions brought replies that confirmed his suspicions, and though the name given was different, he was convinced that his father's murderer was before him. Waiting until the unsuspicious murderer was asleep, the young man softly approached and placing his rifle almost against the sleeper's head fired, in this way avenging his father's death after thirty years.

Another blood feud came under my own observation. In the eighties I happened to be spending some time in a very isolated part of Persia, in a town inhabited exclusively by Moslems and where I was the only European. Among my new acquaintances was a khan, one of the largest local landowners, a young man of about twenty-five and a great lover of sport, with whom I often went shooting. One evening I was invited to dine with this

young man, who promised me that there should be Persian music and dancers. After dinner, about nine o'clock the guests were seated in the large "telar," drawing room, brightly lighted by a row of candles and lamps standing on the floor. In one corner the musicians sat on the floor, and at the opposite end of the room, facing the windows, were the guests. Most were seated on cushions on the floor, but a chair was placed for me as a European and my host occupied another, while a small table stood in front of us. The evening passed as all Persian evenings do—music, the kalian, tea and sherbets. The bubble of the pipes was drowned by the sound of the musicians and the clashing of the castanets of the dancing boys, that always had a depressing influence on me. From the great open window occupying the entire front of the room the soft summer air came in, heavy with the fragrance of the roses that filled the garden. Looking out from the lighted room, the garden seemed dark and mysterious. The khan and I were conversing in low tones, laying out plans for a bear hunt in the mountains the following day. The soloist was singing a popular song recounting the death of Nassir-ed-Deen Shah's mother during his Majesty's absence in Europe. Suddenly the music was brought to a stop by the sound of a shot that seemed almost to have been fired in the room. In the startled silence that followed, I remembered noticing how my companion, the khan, dropped the cigarette that he was holding to his lips, and then to my horror I saw him slowly settle, and slip down out of his chair, while a crimson stream trickled from a small hole in his temple! And so our pleasant evening came to a tragic end.

It was afterwards proved that the death of the khan was brought about by a blood feud that had existed in his family for three generations, and that his was the eighth death it had involved. The murderer had evidently been able to creep up quite unnoticed in the darkness, and take his station among the rose bushes in the garden, from

which place he had a good view of the brightly-lighted room and of my hospitable host sitting by me, unconscious of the fate awaiting him.

In 1897 during an epidemic of the plague in India a strict quarantine was established by the Russians on the Perso-Afghan frontier. Several Afghans insisting on crossing the frontier were fired at, three of whom were killed. Two years passed, and one day a Russian official in Askhabad, going to his office in uniform, stepped into a shop to buy cigarettes. As he stood waiting for change an Afghan, who had been following him unnoticed, slipped up and plunged a dagger between the Russian's shoulders. The Afghan was arrested and stated that he was the brother of one of those who had been shot by the Russian military guard on the frontier. He had come on foot from the southern part of Afghanistan all the way to Askhabad with the intention of having the life of a Russian officer in revenge for his brother's death. Seeing the civilian, whose uniform he mistook for that of a military officer, the Afghan chose this wholly innocent person as his victim.

These instances give some idea of the deep root that the system of blood feuds and price of blood has in Persia, both among the town people and among the nomads, though more particularly so among the latter. It is very often that relatives refuse blood payment and insist on the death of the murderer. This is invariably the case with women, especially if the woman has lost her son. "I shall not drink the blood of the light of my eyes, I demand the blood of his murderer," they say. This is interpreted literally. I can testify to cases where mothers have gone cup in hand to the execution of their son's murderer, and holding the cup to the stream that flowed from the cut throat, drank the warm blood. Such cases are found not only among the masses, but even in the higher circles.

When Agha Mohammed Shah was killed in 1798, his

murderer was given over to the princes, whose small children, hardly able to hold a dagger, hacked and cut the poor wretch until their elders completed what they were not able to do. In the same way the murderer of Nadir Shah was, in 1747, given to his wives in the harem to be done to death by them.

In demanding damages for physical injuries, the law of retaliation is an exceedingly difficult one to apply literally. Only one such case has come under my personal knowledge. During a quarrel a Persian slashed off a small bit of his opponent's ear. The younger brother of the latter, while wishing to avenge his brother literally, miscalculated his blow, and instead of taking off an equal amount of ear, removed the entire member! Thereupon the first offender demanded the rest of the ear of his victim. This the second man naturally refused to consent to, and referred the first man to his younger brother, who had made the unlucky operation. The discussion that followed turned to blows, and finally the younger brother was killed. The elder brother then fell upon his former opponent, now the murderer of his brother, killing him on the spot. The result of all this bloodshed was that the relatives of the second murdered man simply paid the price of the half ear originally lost by the elder brother!

In conclusion it may be of interest to draw attention to the points of greatest difference between the Persian laws and laws common to European countries. In the first place, the possession of property does not give the possessor the right of absolute ownership. On this ground a person considering himself theoretically the owner of property actually held by another, has the right of taking it by force. Second, oaths are administered both in civil and criminal cases, first to the plaintiff, or the injured person, and then to the defendant, or accused. In criminal cases, under certain circumstances, more

than one oath is administered. For example, when several persons are under suspicion for murder they are obliged to take the oath from twenty-five to thirty times, according to the category of their suspected crime. In this case the number of oaths is divided equally among them. If there are five persons, each takes the oath five times. If there are three, two will have it administered eight times and the other nine times. Such oaths are administered to the inmates of a house where a murdered man may be found. Third, voluntary confession of a crime does not act as extenuating circumstance, and the oath is administered just the same. Fourth, the accusers are never examined under oath, as information obtained in this way is considered a sin.

The testimony of witnesses who are unbelievers is accepted, according to most authorities, only when their testimony is in favour of a Moslem. The testimony of women is accepted only in cases that do not involve death sentence, and even then, only when there are men also as witnesses of the fact. The testimony of women alone is void. Fifth, the conclusion given by a Mudjtaheid is considered as final. The civil powers may sometimes manage to evade its fulfilment, but they never venture to dispute its correctness.

Sixth, post-mortem examinations in the interest of legal justice are forbidden by the Shariat. This is naturally the cause of many cases of poisoning going unpunished. By the orders of our Transcaspian authorities an examination was made of the body of a Mohammedan herdsman who was murdered on the frontier. This being known in Meshed, the chief city of the adjoining Persian province of Khorasan raised a great tumult among the lower classes, which threatened to end in a massacre of the small colony of Christians in that place.

CHAPTER XXII

THE PERSIAN AT HOME

Manner of Building his House—Enderoun and Beroun—Cellars—Water-Reservoris—Kursie—Summer-Resorts—Absence of Fashions—Daily Occupations—Presents—Food, Lawful and Unlawful—Wine Forbidden—Persian Table—Sweets—Gez—Wine-Making—Hashish and Opium Serious Menaces to Persia—Edible Varieties of Earth—Amusements—Tamashas—Dinners—Sport—Falconry—Training of Falcons—Special Forms of Sport—Races—Jugglers and Gymnastics.

IN building his house the Persian is guided by custom and religion. His first thought is for privacy, and he therefore surrounds his dwelling with a high wall. The need of running water for the ablutions prescribed by his religion leads to his turning the common water supply through his grounds. Basins or small tanks are made both in the yard and in the house for the water supply.

Further, the two sexes must be separated, and his women so situated that no strange masculine eye can fall upon them, so the Persian constructs two distinct sets of apartments, the enderoun for his women and the beroun for the men. In the absence of timber the houses are built of mud in the poor places, or with sun-baked or burnt bricks as can be afforded by the well-to-do. The roofs, being flat, form sleeping places in the summer and dry, sunny walks in the winter.

The Persians are excellent masons, and are prized as such in the Caucasus, where many go yearly for work. In building a house no scaffolding is put up, the walls being so thick that the mason stands on them, rising with

the wall he builds. As he lays the bricks he sings a pleasing but monotonous song to the men below, who toss up bricks or mortar as he calls for them in rhyme. The earth needed for the building is taken from the spot where the house is built, and from the ground about it. This explains the reason why every Persian house and garden are found to be below the level of the street. The ground is laid out with straight paths and rows of poplar and fruit trees that follow the water courses. So uniform are the Persian houses that the description of one will do for all. There are no windows overlooking the street, only more or less elaborate arched gateways with heavy iron-studded doors and iron knockers. On entering the door and descending a few steps one finds the stables and the servants' quarters to the right and left. A corridor leads into the garden with its large basin of water and flowers that Persians love. The main building, most probably one-storied, faces the entrance, the large reception room occupying the greater part of the façade, with small living rooms at the end and the back.

The "telyar," or large reception room, is the principal feature of the men's portion, and by its furnishings the means and position of the owner may be judged. The front wall is almost entirely taken up by a large window of small, many-coloured glass panes, the sashes of which are raised, and before these open windows the Persian passes most of the summer days. Of furniture in our sense of the word there is none in a typical Persian house, but in those whose owners have intercourse with Europeans, a table or two and a few stiff chairs are found.

The floor, being of brick or mortar, is first covered with reed mats, over which are spread the carpets that form the wealth of so many families. Around the sides of the room, in alcoves and by the windows, are laid mattresses covered with velvet or silk, on which are long, round

cushions neatly piled up against the wall, thus forming comfortable lounging places. The niches that line every room in the thick walls are filled with bits of chinaware, glass candlesticks that delight the Persian's heart, Persian and Japanese pottery, clocks, etc.

In summer, in the richer houses, the walls and ceilings of the reception rooms are studded with bits of gloss that are so cut that as they catch the rays of light the effect is dazzling. Often a little greenhouse or orangery opens from this room. The women's quarters are a repetition of the men's room, but are more luxurious, that is to say, have more of carpets and cushions and china.

The entrance to the enderoun, or ladies' quarters, is generally through a covered corridor, and the longer and more winding it is, the better. A heavy canvas curtain covers the entrance leading into the garden. Here we find generally that the garden is larger and that there are more flowers than in the grounds of the beroun.

The wealthy class have a bath connected with the enderoun. The roofs of the houses are flat everywhere, except in some of the cities along the Caspian coast, where timber is to be found.

As in the summer time the roofs are the sleeping rooms, they too are surrounded by walls to prevent their being overlooked by neighbours.

Under the houses are cellars, used in some parts of Persia only for provisions, but in others as a cool resort during the hot hours of the day. In such cases they are fitted up very luxuriantly, with a fountain playing in the middle, and raised lounging places along the sides. Many houses also have a reservoir for water, called the "abambar."

It is hardly necessary to say that anything like apartment houses cannot exist in Persia, and it is an exception to find even the very poor living two or more families in the same house.

Persians do not like to rent their houses to Christians, as the presence of the latter pollutes them, and in cities where Europeans go for the first time it is often almost impossible to get a house. In places where the Persians are accustomed to them it is easier to obtain houses, but even then only at a far higher rent than Mohammedans would pay.

Moreover, their fanaticism extends even to workmen. The Nestorian masons of Urumiah often find difficulty, good workmen as they are, in finding sufficient employment, as Persians do not wish to live in a house built by Christians. This prejudice is, however, dying out.

In most houses small narrow fire-places are to be found, but they are less used than the "kursie." This is a brazier of coals placed on the floor, over which is set a stool often from three to four feet square and a couple of feet high. Over this is thrown a large wadded quilt, and often handsome silks or shawls are spread over all. Mattresses and pillows are placed around it on the floor, and here the family sits, putting the feet under the quilt for warmth. Kursies are to be found in more or less primitive form in the houses of both rich and poor, and as the doors and windows are badly fitted and the rooms are cold and drafty, many sleep at night around the cosy "kursie."

With the hot season, when the close, filthy streets make town-life intolerable, those who can do so move to summer resorts. Owing to hills surrounding so many of the cities of Persia one is generally able at a distance of a very few miles to reach a considerable rise in altitude with a corresponding change in the temperature. The shah has summer houses built at different altitudes, thanks to which, as the season advances, the court can move to higher and cooler resorts.

One of the first things a Persian will do as his wealth increases, is to buy himself a summer place. This gen-

erally takes the form of a house with orchard or vineyard attached, the whole being surrounded by a high wall.

Persian gardeners have very different views from those of Europe. Lawns, ornamental lakes, rustic bridges and winding paths are unknown to them. A cord is drawn from the gateway and a broad alley marked out, and others cross it, cutting the entire plot into squares. Chinar, or plane trees, follow these alleys, the branches being trimmed off so that they reach a great height, casting little shade. Between them, as well as on the plots laid out, are planted low-growing rose bushes, fruit trees or grape vines. Everywhere streams of water are carried, without which nothing can be made to grow. The fountains are in the shape of round or oblong basins of cement sunk in the ground and throwing up a jet of water, or simply supplied from the running surface streams. About the fountains the noble "nervin" of the Persians, or "kara-agach," as it is called in Turkish, a species of elm (*Ulmus campestris*), is planted. This is one of the most beautiful of all the trees cultivated in Persia. Weeping willows, ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), called by the Persians "bird's tongues," owing to the shape of the leaves, acacia and a variety of the silver willow, the *Elasagnus angustifolia,* are all easily cultivated. The last mentioned tree blossoms in May, giving a tiny yellow bell-shaped flower, with so strong and yet delicate an odour that the air is perfumed for a long distance from the tree. The fruit, that ripens in the autumn, resembles somewhat a date in form and stone but is of a flowery, insipid substance.

Roses, lilacs and jasmines abound, and nearly every house in the town has also at least a few fruit trees, peaches, apricots, plums, cherries, nectarines or pears. Although a flower-loving people, the Persians have no skill in cultivating them, and only the most simple, old-

fashioned flowers, as four-o'clocks, marigolds, pinks, asters and phlox, are to be seen. Finer plants are cultivated only in the shah's gardens or in the gardens of the Europeans. Well-watered gardens grow with a luxuriance and rapidity that would well pay the scientific gardener. Trees attain in from fifteen to twenty years the size that in Russia could not be reached in less than from thirty to forty years.

The clothing of the Persians is ordered by custom and religion, and the word fashion does not exist in the Persian vocabulary. The dress of the people has changed little during the years. The hat that marks the Persian subject, of whatever religion he may be, is the small black lamb's-wool or cloth head-dress called "kulyag." In form it is something like a fez, but without the tassel. As it has no rim, the Persians fasten around it a visor, to shade the eyes in travelling. This hat never leaves the Persian's head by day, and sometimes, even, it is kept on at night, or if then removed, a small skull cap is worn. Thirty or forty years ago in many parts of Persia this hat was high and peaked in shape, but now the low ones are exclusively used, though Naser-ed-deen Shah found a good deal of difficulty in introducing them among his conservative subjects.

Skull caps of felt are mostly worn by the working classes, and the clergy wear white turbans, the sayids, or descendants of the Prophet, green turbans, and Kurds wind many-coloured handkerchiefs around their felt caps.

As it is forbidden to pray when wearing silk cloth or gold ornaments, the men's garments are seldom of that material, but rather of cotton or cloth, while their rings are set in silver and gold watches are seldom carried.

The beard is almost never shaved, and a big beard is considered as the sign of intelligence. In praising a

man they will say, "He has a big beard," and will add, "He is clever, wise," or, as he expresses it, "His words are cooked."

Oaths are taken on the beard, and instead of saying that one was laughed at, they will say, "I laughed at his beard." According to the Shariat, shaving of the beard is looked upon as a humiliating punishment. The Oriental habit of removing the shoes on entering a room is observed, and in making calls the Europeans always wear overshoes which they take off. This custom has its practical reason for existing, as in the absence of other furniture the carpets are used to sit on, and dusty and muddy shoes would render them unfit for seats.

The Persians are very fond of arms of all kinds, and daggers are commonly worn. In a moment of anger these are sometimes used, but generally they serve as ornament.

The routine of the day is also guided by religious customs. The necessity of performing his ablutions and repeating prayers before sunrise causes the Persian to be an early riser. Having said his prayer, or "namaz," he drinks his tea or coffee, smokes a pipe and begins his day —the merchant goes to the bazaar, the workman to his field and the official to his place of service. If he be a "mirza," or scribe, he goes to the house of his patron before sunrise, sure of finding that the latter has already left the enderoun and is seated in the beroun. As there are no special administrative offices, each government official carries on his work in his own house, seated on his cushion with his secretaries seated on the floor about him. The archives, if very numerous, may be kept in boxes or a valise, and the documents necessary for reference are kept conveniently slipped under the mattresses, whence they are easily drawn out when needed. The entire work is done in this simple reception room—telegrams written, important documents drawn up, instruc-

tions given, cases tried, judged, and even sentences carried into effect on the spot, it not being unusual to have bastinado or other punishment inflicted under the open window by which the official is seated. Here, too, in an equally open way, are given and taken the "peshkesh," or presents, without which no important business can be completed, and the amount of which must govern the decisions made.

The custom of giving peshkesh has obtained for itself the right of citizenship in Persia. The peshkesh may take any form, from a flower or cucumber to horses and gold or jewels. It may be given with the innocent, even if hardly laudable, hope of receiving an "anam" or gift of equal or greater value in return, as a gardener presenting to his master the first fruits of his garden, or it may be given with the less innocent and still less laudable intention of influencing the course of justice.

The shameless way in which these peshkesh are given and accepted is familiar to all living in Persia. I will give one instance, the parties to which transaction we knew well. A new governor arriving in a certain province, the chiefs of each department hasten to bring him presents, hoping thereby to conciliate the great man and to keep their situations. One officer, the chief of the artillery, had reason to fear that his chances were rather low, and he therefore prepared as fine a present as he could afford. When he went to pay his respects to his new chief a pair of very handsome Russian carriage horses were led under the window where the governor was seated. The governor glanced at them and then, turning to the anxious officer, said he was much obliged for the little gift, but that he found the horses rather thin and would advise the owner to take them home and feed them up. The unlucky general bowed low and took his leave, followed by his men leading the horses. At considerable inconvenience he raised money to buy

a second pair, riding horses this time. A few days later he presented himself with all four horses. The governor, seated with his water pipe on his cushions by the window, gravely looked the horses over and pronounced them to be in better condition, but added "that there was yet room for improvement."

Our friend left, and this time was obliged to sell his summer place to get money, and the comedy was repeated until eight valuable horses were pronounced sufficiently "well fed" to be accepted.

But to return to our official's office. During business hours he finds time to receive callers and to drink with them glasses of tea and small cups of coffee. About eleven or twelve o'clock the host, feeling hunger, orders lunch. There is no special dining room nor set hours for meals. He eats when and wherever he feels like it. The food is brought in upon trays, and a silk or cotton cloth being spread on the carpet in front of the host, the tray is placed upon it. All that remains is for him to draw closer, saying, "Bismillahi rahmanie rahim," and invite his callers to do the same. Thin sheets of bread take the place of forks, and fingers and spoons dipped in the common dish furnish the rest of the table service.

The Persian cooking is delicious and varied. Rice cooked in many ways, mutton, chickens and vegetables form the base of the different dishes. The more important of the aides of the officials will be invited to partake with him; those of inferior rank will have a tray in the lower corner of the room or in an adjoining chamber. Many governors or officials of high rank in this way feed as many as fifty retainers outside of their immediate family.

After eating, a nap of an hour or two is taken, often here in the same place after the tray has been removed. The bedroom furniture is as uncomplicated as is that of

TYPE OF PALACE IN TEHERAN

the dining room: a mattress, "dushek," a long round pillow filled with cotton or wool, and a wadded quilt. The whole, when not in use, is rolled up and tied in a large square of cotton or wool stuff, according to the means, and put up against the side of the room to serve as a cushion to lean against by day.

After his nap the Persian again begins his work, stopping to perform his devotions at the prescribed hour, this also being done where he has been carrying on all the other details of the day's work.

Sometimes the afternoon is spent in making calls, which he does accompanied by a number of servants, the size of the retinue depending upon his rank. No formal calls are made without first sending to ascertain if the hour intended be convenient to the one on whom the call is made. If it is not convenient, another day and hour is fixed, and our custom of calling and leaving cards appears to the Persian as rude and ridiculous.

The love of outward pomp is never more shown than in the number and character of the escort that all Persians of any rank will aspire to. We had an amusing illustration of this national characteristic when we lived in Meshed. Our coachman, who in his own estimation was quite an important personage, sighed for the pomp that his means did not permit. Occasionally, however, he would allow himself a great treat. Collecting twenty or more idle fellows he would hire them for a few cents to accompany him as escorts on a walk. Putting on his best clothes, he would set out from our stables, pacing along with the slow measured step of the great, preceded and followed by his servants of the hour. As he walked down the great avenue of Meshed small shopkeepers and the many loungers would rise on seeing so important a cortège pass and would ask each other in audible whispers who the great man was. The satisfaction he re-

ceived from this innocent childish exhibition more than repaid him for the money spent, and he would return to his horses with a heart at peace and full of satisfied vanity.

At sundown the streets begin to empty, as there is very little movement after dark. Those who do go out carry lanterns, as few cities in Persia are lighted. The lantern shows by its size the rank of the Persian passing. The simple house owner will go out with a small paper lantern of a few inches in diameter, whereas the servants of the governor general precede him carrying lanterns of the same pattern, but of two feet in diameter.

The Persians are very temperate in their habits and particular that the choice of food be in accordance with the tenets of their religion. The Koran itself says very little as to what is pure, lawful, "halal," or impure, forbidden, "haram." It only forbids pork in every form, the flesh of animals that have died a natural death, and the use of wine. These instructions are found in the 6th Sura and 146th verse:

"Say, I find not in that which hath been revealed unto me, anything forbidden unto the eater, that he eat it not, except it be that which dieth of itself, or blood poured forth, or swine's flesh, for this is an abomination."

A similar command is found in Sura 16, verse 116:

"Eat of what God has given you for food, that which is lawful and good; and be thankful for the favours of God if ye serve him. He hath forbidden you that which dieth of itself, and blood, and swine's flesh, and that which hath been slain in the name of any besides God. But unto him who shall be compelled by necessity to eat of these things, not lusting, nor wilfully transgressing, God will surely be gracious and merciful."

In regard to wine, we find in the 216th verse of the 2d Sura the following words: "They will ask thee con-

cerning wine and lots.[1] Answer, in both there is great sin, and also some things of use unto men; but their sinfulness is greater than their use."

These are all the commands to be found in the Koran, but on this basis the Shariat has worked out a long formula of what is forbidden and the manner of slaughtering animals to make the flesh admissible for food. According to the Shariat, the absolutely forbidden animals are reptiles, crustaceans, fish without scales, as eels, etc., beasts of prey, rodents, hares, etc., birds of prey and those not possessing crops. On the latter ground, the Persians refrain from eating snipe of all varieties. The eggs of birds and fish, caviar, also the milk of animals whose flesh is forbidden, are not eaten.

The doctrines guiding the choice of food is, however, open to dispute, many theologians permitting the flesh of an animal that others forbid. The flesh of a lawful animal may become unlawful, "haram," if it is not slaughtered according to the rites laid down. Aside from alcohol and wine, all fermented drinks are strictly forbidden.

The Shariat enjoins ablutions which should be performed before and after eating, and during the washing God's name should be pronounced.

The Persians have a limited choice of meats, but these they prepare in so many different ways that their table is one of the most varied and delicious. Rice, vegetables, fruit and every green that is not poisonous enter into their menu. In some parts of Persia, as in Mazandaran, rice almost entirely replaces bread, and the poorer sort is used for horses' food. Beef is very little eaten and is of poor quality. The pasture lands being more suitable for sheep, cattle are kept only as needed for beasts of burden, ploughing and for milk. They are therefore butchered

[1] Or. as other translators have it, gambling.

only when past being of use in such ways, and naturally they are then poor eating. Mutton is therefore the staple article of meat diet and is used when freshly killed. Owing to the climate and the absence of convenience for preserving meat the Persians never smoke nor salt it. The only method of preparing meat for storing is cooking it and then packing away in earthen jars with alternate layers of meat and melted mutton fat.

Sweet drinks are very much used—simple sugar and water or various fruit syrups or sherbets.

It is impossible to touch even as lightly as I am doing upon Persian life without mentioning the important part that sweets of various kinds fulfil. No family, no social event is complete without them. A friend arrives, you send him a tray of "shereenie," sweets. A birth, wedding and even funeral calls for them.

In speaking of sweets I must mention one variety peculiar to this country, called "gez," or "gez-angebin," which is made of "manna," a saccharine exudation of certain bushes. Even among the Persians there is a common legend that the manna falls from heaven, which is easily believed by a people who love all that is supernatural, and also as proof of their conviction that "Iran khub meleket est," Persia is a good country, where even food falls from heaven. The bushes known in Persia as giving manna are of seven varieties, some of which are used only for medicinal purposes. Of these is one growing about Tabriz, Khorasan, Kum and Bendar Bushire, the *Hedysarum alhagi*. The manna used for gez is obtained from the Tamarisk (*Tamarix mannifera*), probably the manna of the children of Israel. The tamarisk is found in nearly all parts of Persia, but the manna-bearing kind is only met with in the small district of Hunsar, lying about one hundred miles northwest of Ispahan. The reason of the manna being found only in this place

is supposed to be due to the presence of an insect, *Coccus manniferus,* whose sting sets the sap flowing. The gez made from this manna is considered to be one of the greatest dainties. It is made by pounding the grains of manna to a flour, from which a dough is made, and often pistachios or other nuts are added, with cardamom as a flavour. The dough is worked into little flat cakes, sprinkled with flour and packed in small boxes for sale.

The Persians are extremely simple and abstemious in the matter of food. One often wonders at the strength of the men, who will do heavy work or go long distances on a little bread with a small bit of cheese, a bunch of grapes, or dry fruit. Although wine is forbidden, the Persian often finds the temptation to indulge in it greater than his religious scruples. He does not drink wine as we do, for the pleasure of the flavour, but rather for the pleasure of intoxication, and the sooner that state is reached, the better is considered the quality of the wine. It is, however, considered a disgrace to be seen in a state of intoxication, and the shameful scenes common in many parts of Europe and especially in Russia rarely offend the eye in Persia.

Respect for his host will prevent a well-bred man from drinking too much in company, and drinking orgies are generally carried on in private or in the company of boon companions who do not leave the house until the effects have passed off. It is therefore as much public opinion as religious belief that keeps Persians from drinking, or at least from drinking too much, unless occasionally in private. The wine is usually made by Christians, and is prepared in so primitive a manner that it cannot be kept for export. In time, with the magnificent vineyards, the wine industry will probably form one of the chief items of Persian export.

But worse than drunkenness is the curse of opium. In

Khorasan we found it exceedingly difficult to find servants free from this vice, the physical effects of which are even more serious than that of alcoholism. Two forms of the drug are used, hashish and opium, although the former is strictly forbidden by the Shariat. In spite of this and the bastinado, which is frequently administered to hashish smokers, particularly to soldiers, this dangerous custom is undoubtedly on the increase, more especially among the lower classes and villagers. Hashish is prepared from the flower tops of the Indian hemp (*Cannabis Indicæ*), that grows freely in almost all parts of central Asia. Its preparation is very simple. The flowers of the Indian hemp are pulled while in full bloom, and then rubbed for a long time on a rough carpet. This produces a sticky mass of pulp, that is scraped up with a knife and rolled into small pills. In this form it is known as hashish, or "chers" in Persian.

Chers is smoked in pipes, generally mixed with tobacco. Hashish smokers can readily be detected by their sallow complexion, uncertain gait and wandering eyes. Beginning with small doses, the hashish smoker is forced to increase the quantity, and he goes slowly but surely to a miserable end.

Another preparation is made from the same plant, called "rayhani bend" in Persian. This is made by boiling the hemp blossoms in butter or almond oil. The preparation when mixed with food in the proper proportion throws the eater into a deep sleep for from twenty-four to seventy hours. Rayhani bend is used in Persia for criminal purposes. By means of it women are often abducted, but such cases seldom get out of the harem walls, except in the form of vague rumours. Not being sure of facts, I shall therefore not dwell upon this side of the subject, but will give one instance that took place in the seventies of the last century, a fact well authenticated

and reported by Dr. Schlemmer in a lecture before the "Dar ul fenund" in Teheran.[1]

In the latter part of the last century a Persian occupying an important position was suspected of treason and therefore thrown into prison. By special orders he was strictly surrounded by a picked guard under the command of a trusted "gulambashi" in the employ of one of the ministers. As a man of high position, the prisoner was permitted to have his meals brought to him from home. This was done in large trays and in quantities sufficient not only for himself, but for the entire guard, from the gulambashi down. This continued for some time. One day as usual the evening meal was brought, and in the morning when the guard was changed it was found that they were all in a deep sleep. The gulambashi was carried to his house, and Dr. Schlemmer succeeded in restoring him to consciousness only after seventeen hours. The prisoner in the meantime was safely in "bast" at Sha-Abdul-Azim, some five miles from Teheran, a refuge from which the civil powers could not remove him. Here he remained in safety until his case was tried, and his innocence being proved he was set at liberty.

Many Persians begin from a certain age to take "teriak," opium, which they constantly carry on their persons in the form of pills. It is safe to state that half of the Persians from the age of thirty-five to forty take this narcotic daily. The general theory is that taking teriak in this form refreshes the brain and invigorates the organism as an antidote to old age. The usual dose is from one to two grains a day, and in the moist provinces about the Caspian Sea from three to four grains is the quantity often taken. Dr. Pollock knew a dervish who took seven grains of opium at a time, a suffi-

[1] Schlemmer, "Terminologie medico-pharmaceutique et antrologique Française-Persane, Téhéran."

cient quantity to poison several persons not accustomed to the drug. According to this physician, opium taken regularly in small doses does not have any injurious consequences; on the contrary, he cites cases of people who lived to a great age though given to this habit. Opium is often administered to children, with terrible results if carried to extremes. This is commonly found among the poor when the mothers are obliged to work. We had a Persian washerwoman who worked all day, while her baby, slung in a home-made hammock in a corner of the wash-house, was the wonder of everyone, for it was never heard to cry. We found on inquiry that the poor little creature had a rag with teriak and sugar tied in it, and this was stuck in its mouth to suck whenever it awoke and became restless.

Of course, in such cases the dose has to be increased, and if the child survives, it is a pale, miserable creature. Persian nurses have to be carefully watched or they will manage to give their charges teriak or hashish.

Opium smoking has a different effect, although quite as fatal to the system as hashish smoking. It is generally smoked pure without being mixed with tobacco.

It may be of interest also to note certain kinds of earth that are eaten as delicacies in some places, and in famine years if not as food at least as a means of calming the pangs of hunger. These kinds of clay are called, according to the variety, "gelie-ormenie," or "gelie-kum," as the latter is found near the city of Kum. This is a sticky clay with an unpleasant taste. Another variety is "nadzir," or "bezoart stone," used by the native doctors as an antidote for poison, as well as a dainty that is considered beneficial to pregnant women. The bezoart stones are of two kinds, vegetable and animal, and have a pleasant pungent taste.

The Persian's life is not rich in entertainments, as the

only forms of public amusements or sights are fireworks and races organised by the shah or nobles, and the religious processions and plays in the month of Muharram. Therefore any object or incident, however insignificant it may be, is sufficient to excite interest and to draw a crowd to see the "tamasha," or sight. If the drum and fife are heard that accompany a bridal procession or a bride's trousseau, the streets and roofs are immediately crowded with people to see the tamasha. If Europeans pass through the village, a crowd follows, exchanging remarks that are not always complimentary to the strangers.

The lower classes find great pleasure in spending hours in the cafés, listening to professional story-tellers or singers.

The bath, too, forms something like a club. Occasionally a bear or monkey is led through the village to the beating of tambourines, or a lizard fully a yard long that is to be found in some parts of Persia.

Ram and cock fighting is popular, and during the Easter week, in some Nestorian villages, buffalo fights are arranged. Two crowds gather, bets are made and the entire village turns out for the sport. This is the sum total of popular entertainments in Persia. It is evident, therefore, that each one according to his means tries to supply in his own house this want. This gives rise to the Persian's love of dinners, "mehmani." Among the court circles and higher nobility these entertainments are made in the European style, the dinner being served at tables. Among the middle and poor classes and in the provinces, the dinner is served as it was centuries ago. The menu differs only in quality and number of dishes, according to the position of the host. The ever-present pilaw, for instance, in the richer houses is made of a fine sort of rice that is carefully picked over by the women

in the harem, grain by grain. Fruit, so plentiful and luxuriant in Persia, is eaten by all classes, forming together with bread the staple diet of the poor. In typical Persian houses the dinner is served on the floor without knives or forks, fingers and thin sheets of bread taking their place. Slightly rolling up their right sleeve and leaning forward, the Persian skilfully manipulates the rice between his fingers, eating it neatly and cleverly. The meal is always eaten in silence, and at the close water is brought to wash the hands. After the dinner the conversation becomes general and the current topics are discussed, first and foremost in interest the "amount eaten,"[1] or about to be eaten, by such and such an official. When this favourite subject is exhausted, they begin what the Persians love to call "philosophical discussions." These are based on some quite improbable theory, and it is sometimes difficult to repress a smile on seeing the seriousness with which it is treated. For instance, the ball will be started by suggesting what might be if the Caspian Sea should turn into a Sahara, or if people had wings. In the debate that follows, if a good point is made, the approval of the company is manifested by exclamations of "Philosoph est, paderi Eflatoon!" (He is a philosopher, the father of Plato.) Or they will say, "Plato in comparison with you is but as a dog."

Sometimes the conversation is of magic and witchcraft; of the doings and sayings of the prophets Mohammed and Ali. During this time the merry hubble bubble of the water pipes is the invariable accompaniment. Sometimes musicians and dancing boys are called in, and at the close of two or three hours the guests take their leave, followed by the good wishes of their host that "their shadow may never grow less," and thanks for the "trouble they drew" in favouring him with their company.

[1] That is the Persian expression for taking bribes.

SHAH'S SHOOTING BOX IN THE MOUNTAINS

The Persians are exceedingly hospitable, and no one who comes to the house is allowed to leave without dinner or some refreshment. I have often been present when a dervish has entered and after a general salutation has taken his seat at the tray without any invitation.

Persians are very fond of sport, that is indulged in by the rich for amusements and by the poor as a means of existence. It is doubtful whether in any other country of the same size a greater variety of game can be found than in Persia. Beginning with the lion and tiger, one passes to our northern wolves, bears, squirrels, panthers, leopards, foxes, hare, jackals, wild sheep and goats, pigs, porcupines and wild asses. The feathered tribes, too, offer a large variety, among them being pheasants, several species of partridge, duck during the winter migration, bustards, quail, swan and snipe that winter in southern Persia. The nobles and rich Persians do not care for sport with gun and dogs, that demands tramping and fatigue. They wish a certain comfort and "tashakhuss," pomp. They never go alone, but are accompanied by numbers of servants. The shah often took four hundred to five hundred men with him on his hunting expeditions. A rich Persian takes as many as twenty to forty followers or more. They go with dogs or falcons, or with beaters and dogs.

The spring and late autumn are the best time for shooting, as at these seasons the game descends from the mountains into the more accessible valleys and plains, where they can find food when the mountains are yet covered with snow. At such seasons the Persians often camp out, occasionally accompanied by the harem. The shah has special preserves where he often goes for ten days or more.

There are several varieties of hounds, "taze," in Persia, the most valuable being the so-called Arabian bred, with fine short hair and small pointed ears covered with

tufts of long hair, as is the tail, something like those of a setter. Next to these in the eastern part of Persia are esteemed the Turkoman hounds. After the taking of Geog Tepe a number of hounds of this breed were brought into Russia by our officers.

Falcon hunting begins in the spring when the young birds are large enough. The sportsmen go out on horseback, the hooded falcons being carried on the wrist of the keepers, who wear gloves, while others lead the dogs, and the dogs being loosed the hoods are removed from the birds. As soon as the dogs raise a bird a falcon is let fly, the horseman following its flight as closely as possible to take the game from the claws of the falcon. The largest falcons or hawks are used for hunting the wild goats, whose eyes the bird tries at once to destroy. Hares are also hunted with birds.

The training of falcons is quite an art, requiring aside from knowledge great pains and patience. The greatest difficulty is to teach the bird not to fly away when once it has reached its prize, but to wait to be caught by its master. The bird is snared when young and is at first kept chained to a perch, the head covered with a hood that is only removed to feed it with raw meat. During the feeding the bird is taught its master's voice by repeating to it over and over the same word. The next step in the training is letting it fly within the limits of its chain onto a small bird or animal that is also tied within the circle. All this time the same word is being repeated. When the hawk seizes its prey the trainer catches it, still talking to it, and gives it as a reward a part of its victim. As soon as the hawk does this without showing any attempt to escape, it is considered ready to take on a real hunt.

Falcon-keeping is the most expensive form of sport, as each bird has its own keeper and horse. As they soon lose their health and spirit if confined in one place the hawks are constantly taken on "walks," and it is a com-

mon sight to see a man sauntering through the bazaars and streets with a bird perched on his hand, that in its solemn way seems to take an interest in all the street sights. Although a strong bird and one enduring great fatigue in flight, the hawk is very delicate when in confinement and needs the most careful and experienced care to keep it alive and in good spirits.

In some parts of Persia tigers used to abound, and sometimes daring sportsmen would watch their chance of stealing the young. I knew one man who had succeeded in getting away from the den unnoticed with a cub in his hands. The tigress, however, got on his track, and he saved his life only by throwing the young one down, which the mother at once picked up, as a cat would her kitten, and bounded off with it. The frightened hunter climbed the nearest tree, where he stayed all night, not daring to resume his way for fear the mother might follow and take revenge.

I shall notice in passing two forms of sport that are interesting in their originality. One is employed in following the mountain partridge that is found on the slopes of rocky hills. The hunter makes a shield-like frame almost his own height. This he covers with a white cloth on which are stuck bits of bright-coloured rags. Two holes are made at the right height for his eyes, and holding the shield before him the sportsman goes towards the birds. The partridge, being of an exceedingly inquisitive turn of mind, at once stops to have a good look at the strange object, stretching out its neck and cocking its head with every sign of interest. In this way the sportsman can often get within fifteen to twenty paces of the birds. I must confess, however, that my own attempts with this form of shooting were failures, possibly from want of practice in managing the shield.

Another method is adopted by which quails are taken alive. In the springtime, as the fields become green with

the sprouting grain and the lucerne is in leaf, the quails come down to the plain in great numbers. The sportsman then arms himself with a net, a long-necked empty gourd, and a framework that is attached to his shoulders and rises as a sort of winged hood high over his head. The shape of this framework is such that the shadow cast resembles that of a huge bird of prey on the wing. Walking slowly through the fields with the sun behind him, the shadow falling in front, deceives the quails, and they, taking it for a bird on watch for them, crouch down on the ground quite heedless of the approaching steps. Thus it is easy to cast the net and to put the bird alive into the gourd, that has little holes in its sides for air. In this way quails are regularly brought for sale to the bazaars alive in gourds.

Shooting over the hills is very fatiguing to one unaccustomed to mountain climbing, especially as dogs are of little use, the birds not allowing them to get within shot.

In many of the reedy and wooded parts of Persia are large droves of wild pigs. Mohammedans do not kill them except in self-defence, and they are sometimes obliged to organise a hunt on droves that damage the crops. In such cases the animals are killed, but left untouched on the spot.

In conclusion I must mention one other sport that forms at the same time one of the few popular entertainments or, more properly, sights, and these are the races. They are held in Teheran and sometimes in some other large cities where there are princes or nobles addicted to the sport. I shall here describe the races held in Teheran during the celebration of No-ruz festival, that generally takes place the 1st of April.

Two or three months in advance the princes, nobles and private individuals who have horses to enter, begin

to train them in a way peculiar to that country. The horses are completely covered with thick felts, only their feet and head showing, and every day in this garb they are taken out at a slow walk. Each day the distance is increased, until finally they are kept going all day. During this time the horses are fed little and allowed to lie down but two hours out of the twenty-four. Under this régime they are in a constant lather of sweat, and become so thin that when the time for running arrives they are little more than bones, muscles and skin. The races are held just outside of the city on an elliptical race course giving a little less than two miles' run. On the north side is thrown up a building in the shape of a two-storied house with open rooms facing the track. These form boxes for the shah, ministers and diplomatic corps.

The hippodrome is surrounded by two parallel walls, between which is the race course, a road about eighty-four feet wide. Often from eighty to a hundred horses are entered for the race, which are divided according to their prowess into four groups. There are no rules regulating the size, age nor breed of the horses, nor are there any governing the weight of the jockeys. The latter are, however, generally boys dressed in different coloured shirts. As sometimes the boys are unable to stick on in the swiftness of the race, they are not unfrequently strapped to the saddle! This, of course, is usually followed with fatal results if the horse falls.

The first group of horses makes the round of the course six times, or about ten miles. During the races of 1883 the first horse arrived at the post in thirty-one minutes and some seconds, and another was one head behind, while several others came up a few seconds later. The remaining ten or twelve horses were several rods behind. The first group made the best speed. The second lot of horses ran five rounds in twenty-two minutes; the third, four

rounds in fifteen minutes; and the fourth, three rounds in ten minutes. The first prize for the first group of horses was one hundred tomans, about one hundred and seventy dollars according to the rate of exchange at that time. The first prize for the second group was seventy-five tomans, the third and fourth fifty tomans each.

Of course such small sums can in no way compensate the owner for his expenses, the more so that the horses entered are generally of valuable Arab or Turkoman breed. A Turkoman horse while running looks exactly like a fine hound, but in spite of the great length of their stride the prizes were more often won by the small Arab horses.

The day of the races in Teheran is a great event. At nine o'clock in the morning a cannon shot is heard announcing the departure of the shah, and all Teheran pours out to the hippodrome or onto such of the flat roofs that may overlook the race course, or at least the streets through which the shah and the troops are to pass, for a parade follows the races. The streets are filled with people on foot, on horseback and in carriages of all styles and periods, from the most old-fashioned chariots to the elegant landau of the day. Mixed with the horses are seen the "Camel artillery"—cannon carried on camels' backs. These go out to the parade ground, and the cannon are placed in position, the camels lying in a row behind them. Other cannon, or mountain guns, are carried on mules. The cavalry, in Cossack form, and finally the infantry in uniforms imitating those of Austrian regiments—all this forms a bright, many-coloured picture moving under the blue sky.

Opposite to the shah's box are two bands, one of European music directed by a European, and the other of native music, with dancing boys dressed in women's clothes. Close by stands an elephant with a small pavil-

ion on his back solemnly swaying his great trunk. One by one the horses that are to take part in the race are led before the shah, the master of ceremonies giving the name of its owner and the name, age and qualities of the horse. Then, at a given signal, the jockeys, often boys not over ten to eleven years of age, mount the horses, that, scenting the race, are beginning to get excited. The relatives of the jockeys run at the last moment to tie amulets on their left arms to bring them luck. Sometimes the same boys will ride in the several successive groups without seeming to get overtired.

Water carriers with skins and carrying large jugs in their hands pour cold water freely over the heads and croups of the horses. The horses get into line, and at the signal the twenty or perhaps more steeds break into a run and are soon lost to view by the high inner wall of the hippodrome. Sometimes a horse that has run before in a three-round race and is now entered for four or more rounds will, on completing the three rounds, break for the exit, and the time taken to turn and stop him loses him his place in the race. The race is carried on in an utterly illegal and unsportsmanlike manner from our point of view. Sometimes when a horse belonging to a private individual of little consequence is seen to be in front, sand is thrown in its eyes! The winner of the prize, receiving his money in a bag, places it on his head and goes to one side, followed by congratulations. The horse is at once unbitted, his girths loosed, and he is led about to cool.

After the races are completed the troops pass in review before the shah, and then in the same order march back to the city.

This is all I can tell of Persian entertainments and amusements. Not many nor varied. Of amusements that satisfy the artistic sense there are none. Nor does

the Persian in his present state of development demand them. He is above all a materialist. Poets delighting to describe roses, nightingales, brooks and streams, do so as appreciating them as accessories to "caif." The Persian loves to sit on the shady bank of a stream with his pipe and tea, or a picnic lunch cooked on the spot, but he is untouched by the majesty of the scenery about him and the real beauties that nature unfolds. He loves dancing, yet does not seek for the graceful but the sensual in the motions; he loves story-tellers that lull him to sleep; he loves poetry, but not so much for the thoughts or inspirations suggested as for the musical sound that caresses his ear by its rhythm. It is true he loves a "tamasha" for all it will give him, but further than this he does not go, and to spend money as we do to go to places of amusement is beyond his comprehension. Several years ago a circus arrived in Persia. It was supposed that a people that loved horses as they do would eagerly go to it, but the attendance was so small that the enterprise was given up with considerable loss.

Jugglers have more success, as they are very popular, but even they when invited to perform have trouble in obtaining their money. In the absence of theatres or public places of amusement, Persians of means hire jugglers, dancers, or actors to their houses, promising them a certain sum. It, however, generally ends in a long bargaining, when finally only half of the promised sum is paid and sometimes none at all.

Persians seldom take walks, and in the case of those of any position the cause of their not doing so is easily explained: to go alone is contrary to etiquette; to walk about followed by a crowd of servants absurd. Riding for pleasure is also less indulged in than one would think natural, as it is against the all-powerful "custom" for one of any social position to go off a walk, and it is dull

amusement riding at such a slow gait surrounded by a body of horsemen. The only diversion on their rides is caused by some of the attendants occasionally breaking from the party and racing their horses in a ploughed field, making curves and sharp turns that they love. Riding is more frequently indulged in during the feast of Ramadan as one of the means of killing time and forgetting hunger.

The middle classes frequent a sort of gymnastic organisation where "pehlawans," wrestlers, give lessons in gymnastic exercises to those whose physicians have ordered such treatment. But few attend from a mere love of exercise or sport.

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